

GEORGE W. BUSH: ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

May 29, 2000



What's Next?

Jason Vest • Terry J. Allen • David Moberg • Laura Flanders • David Graeber • Salim Muwakkil



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In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

"... with liberty and justice for all"

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Letters

Cuba and Democracy

Unlike the majority of Cubans in this country, I left Cuba in 1958, at the height of Fulgencio Batista's reign of terror.

I visited Cuba for the first time last November and found quite a different country from the one I left in 1958: Gone were the exclusive social clubs, the opulent residences of the very rich, the gambling palaces, the private neighborhoods. Also gone were the spectacle of malnourished children and adults, begging, selling lottery tickets, living in the streets or in the shantytowns that dotted the outskirts of Havana. It no longer felt that everything was for sale to the wealthiest and most powerful bidder.

As Gabriela del Valle says, the rhetoric in Cuba has remained unchanged for 40 years ("Cuba Divided," April 3). But the Cuban government has shown itself capable of modifying policies and of adapting to the modern world. In response to the economic crisis of the early '90s, the government implemented some changes: allowing private ownership of small enterprises, permitting use of the dollar as legal currency, establishing joint ventures of government and private capital. All of these represented departures from orthodox ideology, demonstrating a willingness to adapt to the prevailing circumstances to preserve the basic gains of the revolution. The results of the reforms have been, in general, positive.

Could the outcome have been better without the burden of the American economic blockade? Or is the blockade a pretext the Cuban government uses to justify failures—as del Valle and many others contend? We will never know unless this country changes its policies toward Cuba. And those, like the revolutionary slogans, have remained frozen for 40 years.

I agree with del Valle that "the time has come ... to preserve the best of the revolution while incorporating ideas of the democratic world." But we must not allow democracy to be used as a Trojan horse for the introduction of rampant capitalism, wholesale privatization, and the dismantling of socialist reforms like guaranteed free education and health care. Those reforms are not only worth preserving, but should be tried in other underdeveloped countries.

Ada Bello
Philadelphia

Gore or Nader?

As a devoted *In These Times* reader since 1976, as well as a member of the political committee of the San Francisco Bay chapter of the

Sierra Club, I was especially impressed with the cogency of both Jeffrey St. Clair's summary of Al Gore's political stance on tough environmental questions and Lois Marie Gibbs' advice to leverage Ralph Nader's candidacy to try to toughen Gore ("How to Deal with Gore," April 17).

As ever, *In These Times* has fostered thoughtful discussion of real strategic choices facing organizations working for social change, rather than theoretical or ideological disputations. The St. Clair-Gibbs exchange should be widely circulated among grassroots environmental activists.

David I. Tam
Berkeley, California

Is Lois Marie Gibbs serious, or possibly that naive? Obviously, voting for the lesser of the two evils hasn't worked, and to even consider Al Gore as an ally to environmentalists and progressives is ludicrous! My husband, children and I are all voting for Ralph Nader and totally agree with Jeffrey St. Clair.

Kathy Schmidt
Philadelphia

Earth calling Lois Marie Gibbs! Anyone who wastes their vote on Al Gore or that son of a bitch whose father scared us over to Bill Clinton in the first place (which I am not falling for a second time!) is no friend of the earth, human rights or democracy. I'm voting for Ralph Nader.

Kathleen Murphy
Seattle

Red and Green

I see that my old comrade David McReynolds is again running for president on the Socialist Party ticket, and that this year Ralph Nader is mounting a more serious campaign on behalf of the Green and associated parties. Surely the Socialist Party and the Greens have enough in common to mount a single "red-green" candidacy this year. That might even be the beginning of a wider effort to unify the left. How about it, comrades?

Marty Oppenheimer
Princeton, New Jersey

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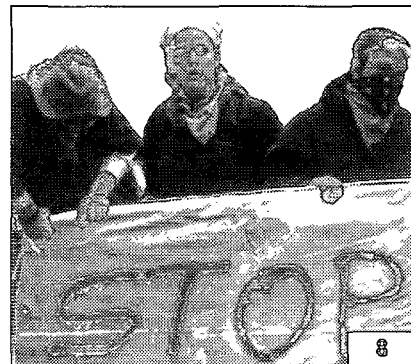
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Cover photo: Jeremy Hogan



A Common Enemy

By Salim Muwakkil

April's demonstrations in Washington and the ruckus in Seattle last November announced the arrival of a new spirit of political activism. After three decades of false alarms, the outlines of a new movement finally seem to be taking shape. Finding fault in such a long-awaited and deeply welcomed development may be looking a gift horse in the mouth. But one question must be asked: Where is the color in this new movement?

As the cultural pendulum swings again toward social activism, the monochromatic complexion of the activists sparks the same concern it did 35 years ago. In both Seattle and Washington, observers noted the relative absence of African-Americans from the mix of protesters, despite the fact that many of the contested issues concern policies that directly affect developing countries, especially those in Africa. Yet African-American activists, by and large, seem less concerned about the more abstract issues of globalism than they are the nuts-and-bolts problems of racial profiling, police brutality and inordinate incarceration.

This diverging agenda is easily explained by the differing social conditions black Americans must confront. A recent study sponsored by the National Science Foundation found a five-year decline in African-Americans' net worth and a wealth gap between black and white Americans that continues to expand despite a booming economy. The net worth of the median African-American family in 1999 was \$7,000. For the median white family, it was \$84,400. This historic disparity of capital is one reason why the issue of reparations for slavery and Jim Crow is gaining such momentum within the black community. Yet reparations have not been linked to larger issues of corporate accountability.

Similarly, the prison-industrial complex, where the scavenger logic of globalism is most crudely

expressed, could be aligned with the overall battle against corporate power. As Manning Marable has written, "There is an inescapable connection between Seattle and Sing Sing Prison, between global inequality and the brutalization of Third World labor and what's happening to black, brown and working people here in the United States." Although the connection is plain, it has failed to produce an organization capable of attracting both blacks energized by recent struggles against police brutality and whites newly lured to the fight for global justice.

Back in 1966, the student activism movement split between the black power advocates and the anti-Vietnam/cultural politics axis. The fuse for this stark separation was lit when black members of the integrated Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee voted to oust white members and transform the group into a black power organization. Issues of cultural autonomy and positive

self-definition were imperative to African-Americans during this period, as they came to grips with the legacy of internalized oppression and self-hatred. However, these issues were less important to their white colleagues. Inevitable differences in emphasis prevented SNCC from acting as a unified force, and white students were urged to form their own organizations.

In retrospect, it's clear that both blacks and whites were challenging the same enemy. The imperialist logic that justified the slaughter of the Vietnamese was akin to the bigoted logic that justified racial exclusion. Some radical black organizations attempted to make that link explicit, but they were drowned out by nationalist impulses coursing through black America at the time. Because of its

Not to look a gift horse in the mouth, but where is the color in this new movement?

failure to grasp black America's need for nationalist expression (and to understand that it wasn't necessarily hostile to the growing progressive movement) the left—even the black left—was reflexively repelled.

We still haven't overcome that divide. Here's our opportunity. ■

Terry LaBan



Seeking Justice

Supreme Court narrowly defends *habeas corpus*

By Dave Lindorff

Those wrongly convicted of a felony in a state court who hope to get a federal judge to review their case had better hope that the decision was "unreasonable," not simply "incorrect." At least that seems to be the position of a badly split Supreme Court, which on April 18 took its first serious look at the limits on *habeas corpus*—the right to appeal to the federal courts—imposed by the 1996 federal Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. In two Virginia death penalty cases—both coincidentally called *Williams v. Taylor*—the Supreme Court held that convicts have a limited right to appeal their state judgments and sentences in federal court.

The strongest decision involved the case of Michael Williams, on Virginia Death Row thanks largely to the testimony of his accomplice in a murder. Williams was seeking a new trial on the grounds that the prosecutor in his case had withheld information from the defense concerning a possible bias on the part of a jury member, who was the wife of the local sheriff and a former client of the prosecutor. A federal court had ordered a new trial, but the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, known for its hard-line support of the death penalty, overturned that decision citing the Effective Death Penalty Act.

Among its many limitations of *habeas corpus*, the law states that federal judges must limit their review of state court decisions to the facts of a case as determined by the state courts themselves. What's more, new evidence may not be introduced if it could have been uncovered during the original trial—even if it points to a defendant's innocence.

The Supreme Court, in reversing the Fourth Circuit, unanimously held that Williams deserved a new trial. Writing for the court, Justice Anthony Kennedy said that the lower court was wrong to deny Williams a new trial simply because he had failed to develop the evidence of juror misconduct. The question, he

wrote, was "whether the prisoner made a reasonable attempt, in light of the information available at the time" to investigate the matter. In fact, the prosecutor had hidden the information from the defense, making such an attempt impossible. Williams was rescued from the gallows a scant two hours before his execution date, when the Supreme Court agreed to hear his case.

In the second case, involving the mildly retarded Terry Williams, another convicted murderer on Virginia's Death Row, the court split 6 to 3, but granted him a new sentencing hearing on the grounds that his attorney was incompetent. The attorney had neglected to inform jurors during the sentencing hearing that Williams had been fed whiskey as a child, or that his parents had been imprisoned for child abuse and neglect. The Fourth Circuit had denied Williams' appeal on those grounds, arguing that the failure of the state court to bring that information to jurors' attention was merely "incorrect," not "unreasonable."

Taken together, the two rulings undeniably weaken the effect of the 1996 act, which was passed during the period of national hysteria following the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building. But they do leave the act intact.

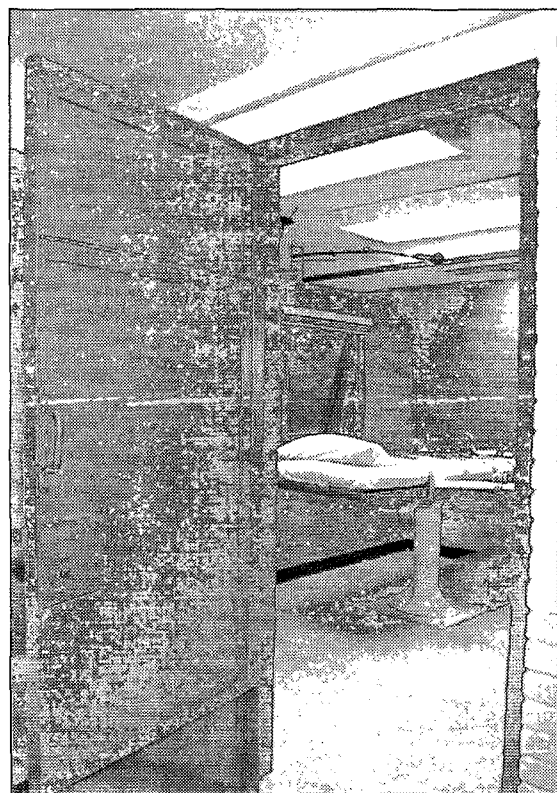
Death penalty lawyers have mixed feelings about the Supreme Court decisions. "It's not as bad as it could have been," says Sean O'Brien, an attorney with the Public Interest Litigation Center in St. Louis. "It increases the deference federal courts must show to state courts, but without taking the teeth out of federal *habeas corpus*."

Leonard Weinglass, the lead attorney handling the appeal of Pennsylvania Death Row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal, takes a dimmer view. "*Habeas corpus* is still alive, but just barely," he says. "The judges accepted the terms of the act—that state court cases decided incorrectly still stand, and that people will be executed even if a state court made

constitutional errors, as long as those errors were not unreasonable."

Weinglass says the high court's decisions means that if a federal judge wants to intervene in a state court case, she will have the authority to do so, but "it also means that a judge can deny a new trial by simply saying that the state court decision was wrong, but not unreasonable."

Abu-Jamal, a Philadelphia journalist and former Black Panther convicted of the 1981 killing of a white policeman, is currently awaiting the decision of a federal judge on his request for a *habeas corpus* review of his conviction, with a



The Huntsville, Texas execution chamber

ruling expected any day on whether his case will get a new hearing. "This is a terrible decision," Weinglass concludes. "It moves us backwards."

The court's latest rulings on *habeas corpus* could have a wide impact. While intended by its sponsors to streamline the execution process, the Effective Death Penalty Act's limitations on *habeas corpus* apply to all state court convictions, from violations of drug possession laws to convictions for assaulting an officer at a demonstration. It also assures a busy schedule in the nation's appeals courts, as some defendants

PAUL BUCK/AFP

whose appeals were rejected due to the act will reapply for *habeas corpus*. Others will ask the high court to define the meaning of "incorrect" and "unreasonable."

However, a number of Death Row prisoners have already been executed without federal reviews of their cases, thanks to the act, which President Clinton signed into law in 1996 despite "misgivings." Pedro Medina, a Florida inmate, was executed in 1997 after his *habeas* appeal on the grounds of mental incompetence was rejected. The Supreme Court declined to hear his appeal after a lower court held that, under the act, he was not entitled to a second *habeas corpus* appeal. Two years later, in a nearly identical case involving a mentally incompetent prisoner in Texas named Ramon Martinez-Villareal, however, the Court held that a second appeal involving mental competence should be permitted.

Defense attorneys say it's inevitable that others will be executed before the limitations on *habeas corpus* appeals in the 1996 act are similarly challenged and further defined by high court rulings. The latest two rulings nonetheless offer a ray of hope to wrongfully convicted inmates. ■

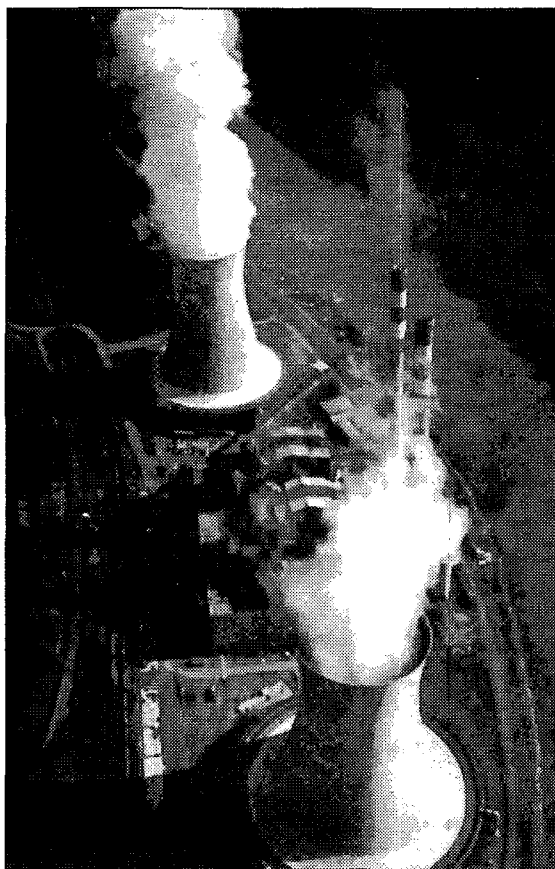
Dave Lindorff is working on a book about the Mumia Abu-Jamal case for Common Courage Press.

Atomic Reaction

Officials use global warming to save nuclear power

By Jeffrey St. Clair

In the latest bad news about global warming, the threat of climate change is being used to help resurrect the moribund nuclear power industry—and people close to Al Gore are leading the charge. John B. Ritch, U.S. Ambassador to U.N. programs in Vienna, recently claimed that only nuclear energy was capable of providing enough power to meet the world's burgeoning energy needs without contributing to global climate change. "Nuclear energy is a technology whose time has come," Ritch said, repeating a refrain that has been heard off-and-on since Dwight Eisenhower's "atoms for peace" program of the '50s.



The nuclear industry is courting developing nations.

Ritch made this bracing comment during his keynote address at the International Conference on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management held in March in Cordoba, Spain. Since 1994, Ritch, a close friend of Gore and Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, has served as the U.S. representative to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency, which sponsored the Cordoba conference. Ritch also is one of three names being circulated to head the Department of Energy in a Gore administration.

Much of the opposition to nuclear power, Ritch suggested, is based on the rhetoric of eco-paranoids who believe that "a nuclear power plant itself constitutes a kind of bomb." Ritch ridiculed such thinking and said that new nuclear power plants are "exemplars of safe design." Ritch must have overlooked the recent spat of bad news: Nine of Russia's 29 nuclear reactors have been shut down in the past few months due to safety problems. In all, there were more than 90 serious safety incidents at

Russian reactors in 1999, an increase of 15 percent over the previous year.

Plants in the United States aren't doing much better, as evidenced by the breakdown of a cooling system at the Brookhaven, New York reactor in early April. But even the worst nuclear accident shouldn't turn people off to the virtues of nuclear power, Ritch warned, because "the Chernobyl accident pales against the threat of global warming."

The ambassador admitted that the biggest drawback to nuclear power is the mounting piles of radioactive waste, now topping 150,000 tons worldwide. But even this apparently intractable problem, Ritch argued, is mainly one of distorted public perception. "Nuclear energy is stigmatized for lacking an answer to the disposal question," he lamented.

Ritch then asked the delegates to develop "several repositories" worldwide so that the nuclear industry can demonstrate how safe waste dumps really are. Perhaps he was forgetting that President Clinton had only days earlier renewed his pledge to veto the so-called "mobile Chernobyl" bill, a measure to designate Yucca Mountain in Nevada as the repository for most of the radioactive waste from the nation's commercial nuclear reactors. Clinton vetoed the bill on April 25—one of the few firm stands he has taken on an environmental issue.

Gore's position on Yucca Mountain has been typically nuanced. He opposes temporary storage at the desert site, but has indicated he may support a plan to permanently bury waste deep in the earth.

Like his father, who oversaw the development of the nation's nuclear power industry, Gore has always been a faithful ally of the industry, even defending hair-raising schemes such as the notorious plutonium-fueled Clinch River breeder reactor. Congress finally pulled the plug on the Oak Ridge, Tennessee, plant in 1984 over concerns about proliferation of

bomb-ready materials and plant safety.

One of Gore's top advisers on climate change is Harvard Professor John Holdren, a vocal proponent of increased funding for nuclear energy as a means of combating global warming. In 1998, Gore appointed Holdren to advise the Department of Energy's budget for global warming initiatives. Socked away in the fiscal year 2000 budget is \$230 million in subsidies for the nuclear power industry, much of it justified on the grounds that nukes will help forestall climate change.

The nuclear industry in the United States is dying a slow death, a victim of dangerous breakdowns, burgeoning stockpiles of deadly waste and profligate spending. But the global warming issue has given the industry a second chance and they have seized upon it, focusing their attention on the developing world—Brazil, India and Indonesia in particular.

Giddy at the prospect of Gore's support for a new generation of nuclear plants, one lobbyist at the Nuclear Energy Institute, the industry's \$20 million trade association, dubbed these nations "emerging nuclear markets." ■

Mad Grads

Graduate student unions are gaining ground nationwide

By Kari Lydersen

Michael Gasper is a Ph.D. student and teaching assistant at New York University. Along with pursuing his degree, he teaches two undergraduate history courses, which take up three or more full days of work per week. Every two weeks, a check for \$666.67 arrives in the mail, contributing to his \$7,900 yearly salary, after taxes and insurance costs have been deducted.

Living on this amount in New York, he says, is "impossible." Other NYU students have it even worse. Gasper knows one student working as a census interviewer part-time to make ends meet—even though she is eight months pregnant. "There's no way you can survive without getting another job," he says, "unless you're lucky enough to have rich parents."

Gasper is one of the thousands of graduate students around the country who spend hours and hours every week teaching classes and doing research for highly paid professors. For their efforts, these students get stipends in the \$500- to \$1,400-a-month range and usually little or no health coverage. "We make a pittance for basically doing the work of professors," says Eric Smith, a Ph.D. student and research assistant at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "If universities can get really cheap labor, they will."

Smith and many other graduate students insist they should be treated as workers, making a living wage with decent benefits. The surest way to guarantee this treatment, many students have found, is through a union. Since the first graduate student union was formed in 1969 at the University of Wisconsin, more than 20 unions at 40 campuses across the country have been officially recognized, and organizing drives are ongoing at many more schools. Most of these are affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers or the United Auto Workers.

Student organizing efforts are regularly met with intense opposition from administrators, with universities bringing in high-priced lawyers to fight unionizing efforts. Administrators say grad students are scholars, not workers, and that union representation shatters the mentor relationship between professors and students.

At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for example, administrators recently challenged students' vote to unionize on the grounds that the Illinois Labor Relations Act forbids students from organizing as employees. On April 6, 50 student workers staged an overnight sit-in at the trustees' building. The case is now being decided in state appellate court.

While student organizing at public universities is covered by state labor law, organizing at private universities is governed by the National Labor Relations Act. At NYU, students won a landmark victory on April 3 when the National Labor Relations Board ruled that grad students can unionize. The students had been trying to unionize with the UAW for a year, but earlier NLRB precedent held that private university students were apprentices, not employees.

The NYU ruling opens the doors for the school's 1,400 graduate students

THIS MODERN WORLD

NOTE: The satirical commentary which follows will undoubtedly provide most readers with more cartoon satisfaction than they ever dreamed possible. However, a recalcitrant minority may find this week's offering predictable, heavy-handed, or otherwise disagreeable. Fortunately, there's something for them as well:

RAINY DAY FUN GAME!

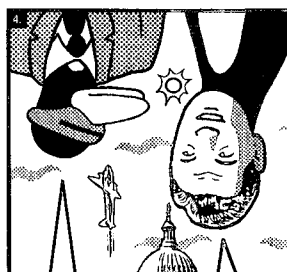
That's right! You see, we've *deliberately inserted* numerous mistakes throughout the following four panels. Can you spot them all? We believe the attempt to do so will provide untold hours of non-partisan entertainment!

GLOBALIZATION IS A FACT OF LIFE AND THERE'S NOTHING YOUR TREE-HUGGING, BLEEDING HEART COMRADES CAN DO ABOUT IT! THEY NEED TO STOP WHINING ABOUT "HUMAN RIGHTS" AND "ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS" AND GET WITH THE PROGRAM!



SO, LET'S SEE, BIFF-- IN D.C., PROTESTERS WERE SUBJECTED TO TEAR GAS, UNJUSTIFIED ARREST SWEEPS, THE CLOSURE OF THEIR HEADQUARTERS ON THE FLIMSIEST OF PRETEXTS--

--ISN'T THIS THE SORT OF SUPPRESSION OF DISSENT WE ALWAYS ACCUSE OUR ENEMIES OF PRACTICING?



SO INSTEAD OF PROTESTING THE ECONOMIC RAPE OF THE WORLD--

by TOM TOMORROW

OH, GET OVER IT, SPARKY! THOSE PROTESTERS WERE JUST A BUNCH OF UNION THUGS AND LONG-HAIRED WEIRDOS TRYING TO RE-LIVE THE SIXTIES!

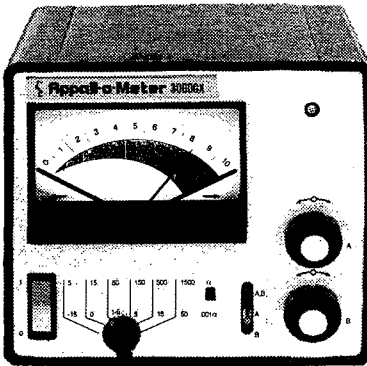
THEY NEED TO CALL AMTRAK AND RESERVE SOME SEATS ON THE CLUE TRAIN, MY FRIEND!



DID YOU SPOT THE MISTAKES?

1. When Sparky says "we," he is clearly referring to government officials and their apologists, of which he is neither. Whoops!
2. Amtrak doesn't really operate a "clue train."
3. An actual defender of the I.M.F. would be unlikely to phrase his arguments in quite this manner.
4. Sparky is talking about the protesters--but Biff's rejoinder seems to refer to the third world nations affected by I.M.F. structural adjustment policies. Whoops again!

SPECIAL NOTE TO READERS PLANNING TO LET US KNOW THAT OUR ENTIRE POINT OF VIEW IS A MISTAKE: Ha, ha! Good one! We sure didn't see that coming!



Appall-o-Meter

By David Futrelle

Gunville, USA [8.6]

What do you give the gun nut who has everything? His own town to live in, complete with "7,200 square-foot gunsmith facility and armory ... 5,000 square-foot video training simulator building with the latest video simulator systems; 12 shooting ranges ... nine 360-degree, live-fire simulators; live-fire, underground training simulator with over 400 yards of tunnels; five story SWAT tower ... and much, much more."

That, at least, is the vision that gun school owner and would-be urban planner Ignatius Piazza has for Front Sight, a resort town currently in development that Piazza likes to describe as a kind of Disneyland for the NRA crowd. Piazza, now energetically promoting the town, hopes to have the development, located

about 50 miles west of Las Vegas, finished by fall 2002. So far, Piazza says he has sold three dozen lots; each lot, the Gannett News Service reports, includes unlimited access to shooting ranges, a leather holster—and a free Uzi.

Not only will Front Sight residents get to play with their guns 24 hours a day; they'll also be able to live in what Piazza promises will be the safest town in America. "We won't have any crime at Front Sight," he recently told visitors to the development. "Not with everyone trained in firearms and most everyone owning them." (Interested readers can view lovely scale models of the planned community at www.frontsight.com.)

Nudist Barbie [6.2]

If you want to strip your Barbie dolls naked and play with them, make sure you do it in the privacy of your own home. British Barbie enthusiast Marcelle Bremner recently was visited by police

constables after she set up a display of "inappropriately dressed" Barbie dolls in the window of an empty shop below her flat. "Police stepped in following a complaint from a neighbor claiming some of the dolls were showing too much leg and others, including a Barbie with no clothes riding a horse bareback, were offensive," London's Bridge News Service reports. The officers reportedly asked her to "tone down" the display. "The officers made me feel dreadful, like I was some kind of pedophile," Bremner told the *Sun* tabloid.



and for those at scores of other private universities around the country, including Yale, where a union drive was defeated in 1995. NYU administrators have hired the same lawyers who defeated the Yale students to lodge their appeal.

Grad students who have had unions for several years have reaped significant benefits from union representation. University of Iowa grad students, who unionized in 1996, now receive full health coverage.

While unions can help teaching assistants and other grad students as they finish their degrees, those who want to pursue a career in academia face dim prospects.

As universities turn more and more to a bottom-line-oriented, corporate model of operation, the number of tenured positions is dropping in favor of grad students and part-time professors teaching courses. At most top research insti-

tutions, 40 percent of undergraduate courses are taught by grad students and adjunct faculty. These part-time professors earn little more than graduate students, often teaching at two or more colleges for combined salaries of \$25,000 a year or less with no benefits.

But part-time professors also have started unionizing at many institutions. While they have fewer legal roadblocks to unionizing, the sheer nature of their schedules makes organizing difficult. "At least a grad student can't get fired," says Rich Moser, a field representative for the American Association of University Professors. "Part-time faculty have no job security, which has a chilling effect on their academic freedom."

Moser says exploitation of grad students and part-time faculty is part of a larger crisis in higher education. "Basically, these universities are teaching students that professors aren't important," Moser says. "What is important is maximizing corporate profit. This new academic labor system reveals a fundamental shift away from the primary goal of universities as institutions for learning." ■

AOL's Liberal Blacklist

America Online's "youth filters," which block out Web sites the company has deemed inappropriate for children, are supposed to keep kids away from pornography and violence. But the filters also black out many liberal political organizations, according to an April 24 report in CNET News. Conservative sites fly through the filters with no problem.

In the "kids only" mode, CNET staff called up more than 100 political Web sites. The Democratic National Committee and the Green Party, among other liberal sites, produced the message "not appropriate for children." Even the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence and Safer Guns Now didn't make it through the filter. But conservative sites like the Republican National Committee, the Libertarian Party, the National Rifle Association—as well as gun manufacturers' sites—loaded with no problem.

The Learning Company, an educational software company owned by Mattel, developed the filtering programs for AOL by compiling a "whitelist" of "approved" sites. AOL spokesman Rich D'Amato told CNET that he was "unaware of any conservative bias" in the youth filters.

Kristin Kolb

Dyke To Watch Out For

By Terry J. Allen

On April 26, Vermont became the first state to legalize civil unions between gays, granting same-gender couples all the rights of heterosexual marriage that a state has the power to extend.

A month ago, as the vote in the Vermont House neared, a small but fervent faction of defenders of "traditional" marriage simmered with moral outrage. When state Rep. Nancy Sheltra stumbled on a stack of *Out In the Mountains*, Vermont's gay monthly, in the halls of the State House, she found a target for her indignation. "It was left in the cafeteria where pages and touring children could see it," Sheltra said. The particular focus

humor. The main characters are as familiar, quirky, likable and irritating as old friends. Their flaws are usually endearing and always forgivable—much like those of the occasionally heavy-handed cartoon itself.

Mo, the lead character and the conscience of the strip since it began in 1983, bears an undeniable resemblance to her creator. "I tried to disguise her ... by giving her glasses and longer hair," Bechdel writes in a collection of essays and comics, *The Indelible Alison Bechdel*. "My success in this effort can be judged by how loudly people laugh when I tell them that."

Both Mo and her creator are given to careful examination of the political

confesses in her coming-out cartoon chronicle, "I knew I was different from other girls. For a long time, I thought it was because I was smarter." After an "astonishing revelation" in college, she realizes "the truth." "Now what?" is her first thought. "How do I get laid?"

During the 17 years Bechdel has been drawing the strip, readers have watched the characters fall in and out of love and lust, change jobs and take on various political and social causes. "I don't know why I even come to this march any more," laments the ever-earnest Mo at a 1995 gay pride parade. "Look at all this rainbow crap. When did we turn from a political movement into a niche market?"

Despite the satirical jabs, Bechdel takes gay politics seriously, both in the strip and in her real life. Before gay marriage sparked discussion in every media outlet, snowmobile club and health food store in the state, Bechdel was skeptical of its value. She viewed gays seeking state legitimacy for their unions as "assimilationist." "Why emulate a system that doesn't work?" she asks, as she inks a last cartoon for her new book, *Post-Dykes To Watch Out For*, to be released in May by Firebrand Books (www.firebrandbooks.com).

But she changed her mind after hearing the impassioned pleas for such mundane rights as the authority to make medical decisions for a sick partner, share in workplace benefits, and be able to refuse to testify in court against a partner.

Bechdel is surprised by the openness of the current debate and the widespread support for gay rights in the state. "It made me feel as if a weight had been lifted that I didn't

know was there," she says. "I went to the candlelight vigil on the State House lawn [the evening that the House passed the bill], and I felt for the first time like a citizen, I felt that the building stood for something." ■



Cartoonist
Alison Bechdel



TERRY J. ALLEN

for her ire was the nationally syndicated cartoon *Dykes To Watch Out For* by fellow Vermonter Alison Bechdel.

"I didn't read it," Sheltra admitted. Had the right-wing Republican representative read it, she would probably have been as horrified by its politics as by its "sexual orientation."

Alongside sex in its richly bewildering blend of passion, jealousy, disappointment, tenderness and absurdity, readers find familiar issues, from the ridiculously petty to the profoundly disturbing: fat thighs, the war in Kosovo, day care, shopping, the demise of independent bookstores, the dubious pleasures of a tofu-based diet.

Bechdel, talking animatedly from the edge of her chair in the rural Vermont house she shares with her partner, describes the strip as "part soap opera, part editorial." In it she successfully juggles heady content with earthy

and ethical implications of even the smallest action. They are saved from tedious earnestness by an ironic overview and an undercurrent of wry self-deprecation. "[Mo] embodies all the values that I assumed were part of being a lesbian when I came out," she writes. "She's basically an anti-racist, anti-classist, anti-big business, anti-consumerist feminist socialist."

Bechdel, 39, was born in central Pennsylvania where she grew up a classic tomboy. "Since earliest childhood," she



What's Next?

By Jason Vest

"Never grow weary of protesting. In this sensitive business of dealing with the public which depends on faith and good will, protest is a most effective weapon. Therefore, protest."

—George Seldes, *Lords of the Press*

Attempting to disembark in Melbourne for the First International Congress of the Movement Against War and Fascism in 1934, German-Czech journalist Egon Erwin Kisch was immediately asked by the Australian authorities if he was a Communist. His answer was confounding enough to result in his detention. "Splendid, splendid!" he said, savoring the inanity of the question. "I can tell you straight off that I will neither make a point of my affiliation with any party nor distance myself from any party by emphasizing my non-affiliation."

That more than 10,000 eclectic protesters came to Washington in the spirit of Kisch's salutation continues to vex so-called opinion-makers well past the actual event. Apparently the punditocracy's view of democracy requires that a succinct, focused press release be placed before them; anything more spontaneous, organic, diffuse and overarching invites scorn.

In the weeks since A16, the op-ed pages have been filled with sardonic snarling. Snidely attempting to conjure a vision utterly at odds with the reality of the protests, *Atlantic Monthly* editor Michael Kelly sneered in the *Washington Post*, "Actually, kids, not to be rude about it, but it must by now have occurred to the swifter among you that you don't possess anything that can coherently be called a cause." *Post* columnist Marc Fisher characterized the demonstrators as "overindulged children searching for ways to upset their elders." The *New York Times* op-ed page spent days unleashing a torrent of vitriolic and unsubstantiated diatribes against the protesters. And just in time for May Day, *The New Republic* posed the question, "Does the New New Left Have a Brain?" on its cover, and inside introduced the "New New Left" as "Bold, Fun and Stupid," with a more prosaic accent on the latter.

There are myriad other examples. Not that the coverage was all bad; media analyst Seth Ackerman of FAIR was pleasantly surprised by the news reporting on A16. "I think reporters were forced to acknowledge criticisms of the IMF/World Bank because of the concerns of the elites," he says. "Op-ed types feel free to ignore the criticisms or distort them. Generally speak-



JEREMY HOGAN

ing, the news reporting on the protests was infinitely better than the commentary, which was atrocious."

Sadly, it seems that the pundits carried the day. Though columnists are by no means obliged to report, it's nonetheless disconcerting that the authors of the aforementioned righteous ripostes chose to disregard the obvious: (1) young people are an integral part of any movement, and, thanks to workshops and teach-ins, many left more educated than they came; (2) there is a learning curve for followers in every movement, especially one as nascent as this; and (3) the vast majority of people who turn out to protest for or against anything—abortion, war, school prayer, Mumia, whatever—are moved more by an intuitive sense of right and wrong than a need for cerebral discussion.

Unlike the events prior to the protests—forums, panel discussions, teach-ins—protests themselves are not designed to be venues for Socratic dialogue or policy formulation, but for visceral expression and street theater. Simply put, it's asking too much of anyone at a protest—or the polling place, for that matter—to offer up a full intellectual articulation of their reasons for being there.

So I was pleasantly surprised when I ventured downtown on A16, to find both performance and erudition. At 20th and Pennsylvania, I talked with a union member from New Hampshire in his early forties; he'd been to Seattle, too, and made a persuasive argument for why IMF structural adjustment policies aren't great for workers the world over. A few blocks away, I encountered an older couple who, after

years of charitable giving to groups working in developing countries, had decided to look a little more closely at global financial policy toward the Third World. They cited William Greider's *One World, Ready or Not* and Michael Maren's *The Road to Hell* as eye-openers, explaining they were here not just to protest, but "to show the reformers in the Bank and IMF that there are people who do care and support them."

I also encountered several longtime AIDS activists, all of whom could articulate how their cause was linked with international finance policies. I talked with some younger people in their twenties who, upon returning from study-abroad programs, Peace Corps assignments and even a corporate internship, had concluded that there just might be other policies worth exploring when it comes to the global economy. And they could explain why.

Save some of the AIDS activists, none of these people, or dozens of others like them I also spoke to, were abolitionists; they were reformers. In some cases, they respectfully and pleasantly conversed with those who wanted the World Bank and IMF eliminated—sometimes for hours, as they sat blocking intersections—and seemed less interested in the righteousness than in actual discussion.

That said, one hopes the movement will work to ensure that its enthusiasm and sense of mission don't slide into illiberal zealotry and absolutism. For instance, the anarchist Black Bloc seemed, for anti-authoritarians, quite comfortable wearing the garb—as well as the attitude—of the balaclava-masked law enforcement agent in full raiding regalia. Roaming the streets with faces hidden behind black masks, they gave peremptory orders with zeal to reporters and fellow protesters alike. For some of the protest organizers, this was just fine: One I ran into gushed about them as "the Marines of our movement."

Another organizer—a veteran activist of nearly 20 years with no shortage of direct action experience—was angered by both this assessment and the Black Bloc. He was hardly alone. At one barricade where protesters had been sitting for hours, 10 minutes of the Black Bloc's goading chants at police brought requests from others to "lower your banners" and "calm down." A cameraman trying to navigate a tight passage of protesters was shoved and hit; as he tried to keep his balance, the Black Bloc shouted, "Infiltrator! He's causing a disturbance!" Nothing could have been further from the truth.

Of course, every demonstration draws more radical elements, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse. But the masala of ideas, ideologies and philosophies at A16, while beautifully democratic, also was profoundly confusing to those average citizens who most need educating about the World Bank and IMF.

A16 was a success: It forced authorities—from police to finance ministers—to defend their authority. It strengthened the hands of delegates from developing nations, who were able to point to crowds and show that not all citizens in privileged circumstances believe in the Washington consensus. It provided positive reinforcement for those involved in related endeavors, from Justice for Janitors to the

amazingly successful anti-sweatshop activities that have recently swept American campuses. And it helped solidify the coalition between labor and the direct action folks.

Seven international unions and the AFL-CIO signed on to the permitted march and rally, and from there a good working relationship evolved. Ironworkers helped build a stage for the rally; Service Employees Local 82 opened its doors for student meetings, puppet making and a medic station. "The policy differences and the cultural differences between these new allies didn't shift in these few weeks," says Colin Greer of the New World Foundation. "But by making solidarity real and by being there for each other tactically and strategically, the movement avoided splintering and gained momentum."

Seattle and A16 have grabbed the nation's attention. So what's next? When activists recently dogged Commerce Secretary William Daley's corporate convoy—something that got far less national attention than either of the big protests—their mere presence at every stop put the powers-that-be on notice. Activities like this should continue with gusto. But what matters most now is providing the public with information on the alternatives to globalization—through roadshow forums, broadcast appearances, and as many articles, op-eds and letters to the editor as can be written. ■

The Insider

Joseph Stiglitz challenges the Washington consensus

By David Moberg

While pundits were quick to attack shortcomings in the international financial savvy of protesters at the April demonstrations against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, it is harder for them to dismiss the credentials of critic Joseph Stiglitz.

Stiglitz, who recently resigned as chief economist of the bank, is a distinguished academic and former chief of President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers. He is pleased with the success of the protests in getting across a basic message. "What is at issue is a question of values," Stiglitz told *In These Times*, "of democratic processes, the environment, workers—and how partly because of the absence of democratic process, decisions were made that jeopardized the livelihoods, and even the lives, of many of the world's poor."

Stiglitz, chief economist from 1996 until last November, often got into trouble for his willingness to disrupt the "Washington consensus." Although Stiglitz worked to change World Bank practices from the inside, he was hampered by the power of the IMF to define the broad economic framework that the World Bank functioned within and by the enormous pressure to maintain a unified voice among global financial institutions. So last year he decided that he had to leave to express himself more freely.

He joins a growing list of supporters for deep reform of the institutions. Though students, environmentalists, union members and a variety of non-governmental advocates for developing countries were the mainstays of the Washington protests, leaders of the G-77 group of developing

countries applauded the demonstrations from their meeting in Havana. And just before the spring meetings, a largely conservative congressional advisory commission called for radical changes at the IMF and World Bank.

Stiglitz is particularly unhappy with how the IMF and World Bank have responded to these calls for change. "There was certainly no engagement on the broad, fundamental question about democratic process—and whether there was a balance of representation in the decision-making process of financial interests versus workers," Stiglitz says. "What's remarkable, I see no indication of a grasp of that even as an issue."

The real problem, Stiglitz says, is that both institutions are primarily accountable to finance ministries, which are closely tied to private financial markets, central banks and global corporations. "Financial markets tend to be very secretive," Stiglitz says. "Central banks aren't democratically accountable in most countries. The IMF agenda has been to make them more independent and less democratically accountable. You can debate the economic virtue of that policy, but it affects the culture, and I would argue that for most countries it hasn't [improved] the variables that matter, like growth and stability."

growth. ... There isn't the intellectual basis that you would have thought required for a major change in international rules. It was all based on ideology."

When the crisis hit, the IMF insisted on policies that were inappropriate for countries that often had thriving economies and responsible budgets, pushing them deeper into crisis. "If you close 16 banks and announce that other banks may be closing, then you shouldn't seem surprised when there's a run on the banks," Stiglitz says, referring to IMF policies in Indonesia. "If you have an economy going into depression, with people losing jobs and wages falling, and then food and fuel subsidies to the poor are cut, you shouldn't be surprised there's a riot."

Part of the problem is that the interests of poor countries differ from those of central bankers and private money managers from rich countries. "From their point of view, the first priority was not maintaining the Thai gross domestic product at the highest level, as it would be if I were the chief economist of Thailand," Stiglitz says. "They put more priority on creditors getting repaid." Contracts with workers were broken with impunity, he observes, but despite the centrality of bankruptcy in modern capitalism, the IMF considered every debt to foreign lenders inviolable.

The problems of the IMF and World Bank also reflect deeper problems of the economics profession. "There are dimensions [of the economy] that we [economists] forgot about before, like insecurity and volatility, which are related to the increase in poverty," Stiglitz says. "A more volatile situation means that more people go below the poverty line. Many factors are irreversible, which people forget. It's much easier to destroy firms than to create new firms. If a child is malnourished and brain damaged, feeding him later doesn't reverse that. If schooling is interrupted, the probability of education being restored is low."

For many years, the IMF—with support from the World Bank—has insisted that the solution to global poverty is its draconian program of "structural adjustment." But "many developing countries need assistance because they're poor," Stiglitz says. "Structural adjustment suggests they're out of kilter, that they need a nose job. My point is they're poor and need more money to be less poor. If the IMF gets out of lending to developing countries, then the World Bank will be freer to move ahead in this direction."

But the fundamental reform needed to manage the global economy is more open and democratic debate, Stiglitz argues. "If there were more opportunity for discussion, there would be more scrutiny," he says. "We're getting more discussion today, but very little inside the institutions."

Stiglitz fears that IMF and World Bank responses to criticism will be superficial without some fundamental restructuring of who has a voice in their decisions. "The institutions themselves, in the process of fighting for their survival, will pay lip service to change while drawing up the bridge." ■



The new guardians of global finance.

The biggest mistake the IMF made in recent years was its handling of the 1997 Asian crisis. First, the IMF pressured rapidly developing Asian countries like Thailand and Korea to eliminate most controls over the flow of capital. Speculative money flowed in, often distorting the economy, then suddenly rushed out on rumors of economic problems, plunging countries into crisis. "There never was economic evidence in favor of capital market liberalization," Stiglitz says. "There still isn't. It increases risk and doesn't increase



Breaking Law To Keep Order

By Terry J. Allen

It's a win-win for everybody," said Police Chief Charles Ramsey, assessing the IMF/World Bank protests that engulfed Washington in mid-April. "The bank was able to meet. The protesters were able to express their views and exercise their First Amendment rights, and we were able to maintain peace. We were able to keep ourselves from being the issue. That's a very thin line to walk."

Far too thin, charge some, for the legions of armor-clad D.C. police, U.S. Marshals, National Guard troops, and FBI, Secret Service and ATF agents, as well as neighboring law enforcement agencies that backed them up.

For now, police are basking in a warm glow of triumphalism. But as activists and lawyers review police conduct, they are uncovering a pattern of pre-emptive raids, restrictions, harassments, arrests and seizures, as well as instances of police brutality. There is much to dissect: Police department strategy was sometimes restrained and justified, sometimes technically legal but chilling, sometimes violent, and sometimes—civil rights lawyers charge—illegal and unconstitutional. Katya Komisaruk, a lawyer for the Midnight Special Law Collective, a mobile legal team that supports movement activists, is one of the lawyers currently preparing a lawsuit against the department. She says police violated activists' First, Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment rights by restricting their free speech and due process.

In trying "to save the city," as Ramsey put it, law enforcement agents surveilled activists, infiltrated meetings disguised as participants, conducted a mass arrest of more than 600 non-violent marchers and bystanders, mistreated people in custody, confiscated First Amendment-protected literature, violated a contract with protesters' lawyers, and used the fire department—thereby avoiding the need for a warrant—to search and then shut down the organizing headquarters. In violation of department policy, police frequently failed to wear identifying badges, refused to give shield numbers, and arrested peaceful protesters without a warning or an order to disperse.

The lawyers bringing suit say legal precedent, much of which dates back to the civil rights era, is on their side. They are also looking at cases such as *Collins v. Jordan*, a 1997 ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals that "First Amendment activity may not be banned simply because prior similar activity led to or involved instances of violence. ... The proper response to



JIM WEST

Whose streets?

potential and actual violence is for the government to ensure an adequate police presence and to arrest those who actually engage in such conduct, rather than to suppress legitimate First Amendment conduct as a prophylactic measure."

Ramsey all but admitted to APBNews.com, a crime news Web site, that his actions were indeed prophylactic: "There were groups trying to agitate, and another group who could have committed acts of violence and vandalism. We wanted to neutralize these groups. No one wanted to see another Seattle."

In the weeks leading up to A16, Washington spent \$1 million on riot gear and high-tech equipment and trained some 1,500 officers in crowd control using footage of Seattle. (Police also showed the video to area business leaders.) During the demonstrations police maintained the upper hand, aided by good leadership, disciplined troops, the cordoning off of 90 city blocks, and helicopter, rooftop and on-the-ground surveillance. They also used informers. "Ramsey, probably working with some of the federal agencies in D.C., was successful in infiltrating some of the groups," says Robert Scully, executive director of the National Association of Police Organizations, "and had firsthand, inside information of who, when, why and where things were going to happen." Executive Assistant Police Chief Terrance Gainer says that to his knowledge no electronic surveillance was conducted by the department, since that would have required a court order and none was sought.

Although the level of violence was far lower than in Seattle, brute force in Washington was never more than a nightstick away. Police insistence that their use of chemical

weapons and batons was minimal and appropriate is countered by numerous observers. While police sometimes ceded streets to demonstrators and ignored provocative violence, at other times they cracked down hard on nonviolent protesters or in response to minor infractions. Witnesses stood aghast when officers dragged a protester out of a crowd and beat him bloody or doused peaceful activists with pepper spray. Some demonstrators ended up in the hospital with broken bones and other injuries. AP photographer Heesoon Yim was hospitalized for a concussion and scalp wound after being clubbed. Ramsey defends the professionalism of his troops and says he has "no regrets."

The activists who came to Washington in the thousands were not without resources and planning of their own. In the week leading up to the mass demonstrations, they assembled at the Florida Avenue Convergence Center, where they learned nonviolence training, media relations and street medicine and law. In the grubby, chaotically energetic warehouse, an amorphous group of activists coordinated hundreds of media tours and prepared puppets, plans, pamphlets and thousands of meals.

Although police had roamed freely through the center for days, surveilling the neighborhood, conspicuously writing down license plate numbers, and occasionally stopping and

frisking people, they took no action against the center until Saturday, April 15—the day before the main demonstration, a day when courts were closed. At 8 a.m., with two fire inspectors in the lead, police roused 300 groggy activists into the gray drizzle and sealed off the building.

The prize capture of the raid was what police dubbed "a potential Molotov cocktail," a plastic bottle with a rag either in it (or depending on account, nearby). Police also raided the kitchen where they cited chili, onions, garlic and gazpacho as "potential homemade chemical weapons." Two people were arrested. "What are they going to charge them with?" quipped Mara Verheyden-Hilliard of the Partnership for Civil Justice, a public interest law firm, "Unlawful possession of gazpacho?"

No one believed that fire code violations were the real reason for the closing, especially in a neighborhood where low-income renters plead in vain for attention from fire inspectors. But under this pretext, police were able to enter, search and close down the headquarters without a warrant. "Once the Fire Department knew" about the danger, Gainer says, "it had to act." Asked if police had given the Fire Department a heads up about possible violations, Gainer answers, "Police and fire did have ongoing conversations about that, yes." And he adds, "It was to our delight that it did discombobulate a bit the protesters, and to the extent it threw them off balance, that was helpful too."

The assertion that police closed the Convergence Center to disrupt the demonstration is bolstered by the department's subsequent refusal to allow protesters to retrieve medical supplies, literature and banners—a refusal that will be at the crux of one set of future legal actions against the D.C. police. The Partnership for Civil Justice tried to force the city to release



The Riot that Wasn't

By David Graeber

Hundreds of masked, black-clad anarchists adopted Gandhian tactics of nonviolent resistance during the IMF/World Bank protests in Washington, joining with other protesters in forming human chains blockading intersections, singing songs, playing musical instruments and greeting lines of heavily armed riot police with chants of "everything we do, we do because we love you." The news media, frustrated at the lack of images of violence and destruction, took vengeance in the only way they knew how: They declared the event a victory for the police.

The obvious contrast was with Seattle, where—amid the thousands of anarchists—a "Black Bloc" of about 70 or 80 militants carried out a systematic campaign of attacks against the property of particularly egregious multinational corporations. This was anything but random violence. In fact, the Black Bloc did not consider it violence at all, since they were careful to avoid doing anything that might physically harm people. (As one communiqué later put it: "We contend that property destruction is not a violent activity unless it destroys

lives or causes pain in the process. By this definition, private property—especially corporate private property—is itself infinitely more violent than any action taken against it.") It did, however, provide an excuse for calling in the National Guard and for massive violence by soldiers and police.

In Washington, things were very different. The Black Bloc has become much larger; most anarchists seemed to be affiliated in one sense or another. But while more militant than most protesters (anarchists spent a lot of time piling up barricades and, in one instance, borrowing huge iron girders from a nearby construction site), this time a conscious decision had been made that there would be no attacks on property. This decision was adhered to with remarkable discipline, but it threw the mainstream press for a loop. After Seattle, they were clearly ready to paint anarchists as the left-wing equivalent of militia crazies, as a horde of rampaging Unabombers. Now what?

Anarchists disappeared from the coverage entirely; if they weren't rioting, then they weren't there (or weren't anarchists). Editorials also consistently treated protester self-discipline as a failure. A front-page editorial in the *New York Times* lauded Washington police for acting "sternly and

the organizing materials. They got federal Judge Thomas Hogan to agree to an emergency hearing Sunday morning. But rather than see the issue come before the court, the D.C. Office of Corporation Council signed a contract agreeing to allow the protesters to retrieve the "First Amendment protected materials and medical supplies" at 7 a.m., prior to the Sunday demonstration.

But when Partnership for Civil Justice lawyer Carl Messineo arrived, police refused to let him inside. Gainer later insisted that police really wanted to release the medical and other materials. "But they couldn't get in," he said, explaining that someone had broken off a key in the lock of the interior door to the room where the goods were stored.

In an affidavit obtained by *In These Times*, however, a locksmith called to the scene on Saturday afternoon to secure the

outside doors said that all the interior doors in the center, including the one to the medical room, were open when he arrived at 4 p.m. They were still open when he returned and toured the site at 7:30 a.m. on Monday, April 17.

Police finally released the medical supplies and organizing pamphlets on Monday night—after the demonstrations ended. "The only reasonable conclusion you can draw is that police absolutely intended to restrict First Amendment rights," Messineo says. "They set out to make sure these demonstrators' political views would not be heard."

Some of the rumors spread by police were more inflammatory than the alleged fire hazard at the Convergence Center. A pre-emptive raid on several vehicles on Wednesday netted police seven people and PVC pipe (that could be used to lock people down during sit-ins) and other "instrumentalities of crime." These raids, Gainer says, were implemented to prevent the crime of impeding traffic.

Gainer also told media that on Friday night, April 14, when police raided a Kalorama Street house used by activists, they found "small caliber ammunition" along with the chains and PVC pipe. Three were arrested and charged with possessing "implements of criminal intent." According to a woman staying at the raided house, the only "ammunition" was fake bullets in her decorative cowboy belt, which police confiscated. Police records, says police spokesman Anthony O'Leary, show no ammunition logged into evidence from the raid.

Although the level of violence was far lower than in Seattle, brute force was never more than a nightstick away.

instead endlessly focusing on those rare moments when police batons were descending on someone's head.

So far, the Black Bloc has refused to take the bait. Actually, the consensus among

anarchists in the immediate wake of the demonstrations has been that their performance was a great success. Anarchists took the lead in a number of marches and actions, especially on April 17 during the rainstorm (one popular chant invented for the occasion: "We're wet! We're tired! Abolish the World Bank!"). The event proved an ideal forum for disseminating libertarian socialist ideas. In fact, the organization of the emerging protest movement as a whole has been along remarkably anarchistic lines—with no national leadership, no overarching hierarchies but a vast collection of autonomous affinity groups, each operating on principles of democratic consensus. If the movement continues to grow, and maintains its anti-authoritarian structure, the anarchist movement will continue to grow with it. ■

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pre-emptively" by forcibly shutting down the protest headquarters and rounding up hundreds of nonviolent marchers on trumped-up charges on April 15, which they said "allowed the police here to mostly avoid the kind of widespread chaos that disrupted world trade meetings in Seattle last year, a feat the protesters said they hoped to repeat." In other words: If the police manage not to run amok, but are calculating in their application of brutality in repressing constitutional rights, they win, and the newspapers will praise them; if the protesters fail to run amok, they lose.

TV reporters hammered the point home by consistently avoiding any pictures of the actual blockade—presumably on the principle that images of young people holding hands amidst music, colorful costumes, streamers and giant papier-mâché birds might leave too many young people in the audience with the impression that rebellion is fun—but

But the specter of violent protesters—armed with Molotov cocktails and possibly guns—readied an already nervous public for the whoop of batons and whiff of pepper spray that was soon to follow. “The point of these pre-emptive actions,” says Zack Wolfe of the National Lawyers Guild, “was to frighten people and send them the message that if they participate in free speech activity, police will bust down their door in the middle of the night and close down areas where people are gathering to learn. There is no way it can’t have a huge chill on First Amendment rights.”

Police treatment of demonstrators on Saturday, the day before the main event, sent a similarly chilling message. After rallying briefly at the Justice Department, a group of 1,000 people protesting the prison-industrial complex marched a dozen blocks toward the IMF. Suddenly, the police escort, which had been efficiently rerouting traffic in front of the march, and herding the demonstrators onto the sidewalk when they veered into the street, blocked the way. The marchers, not wanting a confrontation, decided to dis-

perse, but their retreat was blocked by lines of officers in riot gear, who refused to allow either protesters or reporters to leave. Hemmed in for 90 minutes on 20th Street, the protesters waited anxiously, sealed off by more than 200 police on foot and horseback. The level of fear rose



when police ordered journalists to leave or face arrest. Most left but about 15 refused, some out of concern for the demonstrators. “I have been covering this stuff for 15 years,” said a trapped NBC cameraman, “and I’ve never seen anything like this.”

In the end, announcing that the marchers were parading without a permit, police arrested more than 600 protesters, one *Washington Post* photographer and, police acknowledge, a few tourists and bystanders who were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Wolfe says this police action further “chilled dissent and kept crowds down for Sunday’s mass demonstrations” by instilling fear of being swept up in arbitrary arrests. They sent a message that “if you are in the vicinity when free speech happens, you are in danger of being arrested, tear gassed and hit with clubs.”

While Sunday was relatively peaceful, the pattern of intimidation and selective arrests picked up on Monday, the day targeted by organizers for the most militant actions and mass arrests. Police swooped down and arrested a group of about 15 people walking down the K Street sidewalk. Dressed like Black Bloc anarchists, the group was neither blocking pedestrians nor demonstrating. A search netted gas masks, “Seattle solution” (antidote to chemical weapons), a box of nails and one slingshot.

The demonstrations came to a wet end Monday afternoon with a wave of ritualized arrests, when some 400 demonstrators offered themselves up to police. Some of those willing to risk arrest wanted to challenge the police more directly and break through the barricades. But with many of the more radical elements rejecting arrest altogether or already swept off the streets

The Protest Next Time

By Laura Flanders

It isn’t often that I agree with the editorial writers at the *Washington Post*. But on April 19, referring to the World Bank/IMF protests, the *Post* editorialized that the city should be “grateful” to Police Chief Charles Ramsey. I agree. We have something to thank the police for. Not, as the *Post* would have it, “for the professional manner in which they handled the week-long protest.” Rather, for they way, with batons, barricades and brutality, they gave some fledgling activists experiences shocking enough to bind them for the long haul to the movement for radical change.

Matt Ginsberg-Jaeckle, a 17-year-old high school senior from Boulder, Colorado, spent eight hours in water-soaked clothes and shackles, on a cold, concrete jail floor, denied food, water and use of a telephone. “I learned a lot more in that week than I would have learned in a million weeks of school,” he told the *Colorado Daily*.

“We were told that a bunch of ‘niggers and faggots’ were going to rape us and beat us, and that we would get HIV and AIDS,” he said. “If a bunch of mostly white people who had the whole world watching them were treated the way we were, the

way the regular prisoners are treated must be unbelievable.”

Similar stories are being heard everywhere, as 1,300 detainees return home, some of them having spent six days in conditions they call “outrageous.” Many had signed up to protest, as Ginsberg-Jaeckle did, because they “firmly believed that it was our right to be represented in those [global finance] meetings.”

Others signed up for nothing, but may return for the next protest. Mike Fassler is one of them. A 26-year-old Kentucky native, Fassler has never been an activist. “I watch CNN from time to time, but I don’t write letters to my congressman,” he says. He maintains the office mainframes at Leonard, Hart, Frost, Lilly and Levinn, a K Street law firm. The job often involves working off-hours. This was the first time it entailed arrest.

On Saturday afternoon, April 15, Fassler left work and headed home. “I was walking toward the Metro and I had to walk through a crowd,” he says. A group of 600 or so were walking the sidewalk protesting the death sentence of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the prison-industrial complex. At the end of the block, Fassler came face to face with a police barricade. He turned around, and found another police line. “I was caught between them. There was no way to get out.”

in pre-emptive police raids, those in favor of more ceremonial civil disobedience prevailed. The cold, rain-soaked protesters walked slowly through an opened police barrier a few blocks from the IMF. Some knelt before police to receive the handcuffs. The arrests came after surreal negotiations between Gainer, holding a bunch of roses, and spokeswoman Mary Bull, dressed like a molting tree. As one of his "concessions," Gainer agreed that the police would don their badges.

But activists' compliance on the street turned to resolute defiance and solidarity once inside Washington's jails. Many of those arrested reported that, out of the glare of cameras, police beat, intimidated and humiliated activists. Numerous people reported that they were left in unheated spaces in

wet clothes, without blankets; some were not fed for 24 hours or went long periods without water; despite nonviolence some were shackled ankle to opposite wrist; others endured homophobic and racist comments. Two people were taken to the hospital.

Despite the abuse, 156 maintained solidarity until April 21, refusing to give their names until lawyers negotiated a plea bargain. Under the agreement, those in jail, as well as more than 250 who had been released but had not paid a fine, had their charges downgraded to jaywalking, with a \$5 fine.

Ramsey was right that both sides won something. The D.C. police prevented another Seattle and gained—at least for the moment—accolades from media and colleagues, including police observers from Los Angeles and Philadelphia, who will implement the lessons of Washington at the presidential conventions.

The demonstrators turned downtown Washington into a free zone that was militant, celebratory and anti-corporate. They continued to expose the effects of IMF and World Bank policies on the world's poor, the global environment and U.S. workers. The planned lawsuits, Verheyden-Hilliard says, "will seek to remedy the abuses and instruct police and national leaders that they cannot stifle dissent."

"The fact that police used tactics usually reserved for armed terrorists is a testament to the threat that our movement represents," says John Sellers of the Ruckus Society. "That threat is the challenge we make to corporate power and the light we shine on such secretive institutions as the World Bank and IMF." ■

Executive Assistant Police Chief Terry Garner, holding roses, negotiates with spokeswoman Mary Bull, dressed like a molting tree.



It's here that Fassler's pronouns switch from "them" (the protesters) to "us."

For two strange hours, this apolitical computer techie and his new, de facto colleagues asked police to let them go. "All we wanted was peacefully to disperse. I kept telling them that all I wanted was to go home."

Instead, the police arrested them, one by one. The only people the cops let leave—in fact, forced to leave—were reporters who, like Fassler, had been caught up in the corral. "The right to assemble—at least on the sidewalk—and to have press present to witness is just theoretical, as I found out," Fassler says.

Bused to a local Police Training Academy, his group of 30 or so were kept for nine hours, their wrists handcuffed behind their backs. They were locked for a further nine hours into what the U.S. Marshal's office calls "three-piece suits"—running chains that link a person's right wrist to his or her left ankle. "It was painful to move. I still can't wear my watch," says Fassler, four days later.

"The three-piece suit is standard procedure," says Todd Dillard, U.S. Marshal for the D.C. Superior Court, where Fassler and others arrested were brought. Because they were

shuttled among D.C. police, U.S. Marshals and the Correction Department's wardens, there's much passing of the buck going on. Dillard denies that his officers, who've come in for the sharpest criticism, committed any abuse. "I've received not one incident report from any of my employees." The D.C. police and the Warden's office did not respond.

Fassler says that on his bus Marshals gagged one protester, kicked the feet out from another and smashed his face into the floor. In a holding cell at the Police Academy, he claims that Marshals threatened them: "They told us they could do anything they wanted. They said, 'There's no camera in here. Who are they going to believe?'"

AIDS, gay rights and civil rights organizations including the ACLU, the National Lawyers Guild and the NAACP are demanding investigations into abuses committed by the security forces in Washington. Fassler says his lawyer filed a wrongful arrest suit against the D.C. police on April 24.

Will he be there at the demonstration next time? "Perhaps," he says. "I'll never be the same." ■

Laura Flanders is managing editor and host on Radioforchange.com, the new radio network from the Working Assets Funding Agency.



BENCH PRESS

He defended anti-abortion extremists and clinic blockers. He likened the drive for legal protections by gays and lesbians to the Nazis, calling it a "panzer movement" that is "out to destroy the family as we know it." But Jay Sekulow is no man of the margins. And next year he could be screening nominees for the Supreme Court—from inside the White House.

In its sporadic attention to George W. Bush's courtship of the religious right, the press has focused on the Texas governor's visit to Bob Jones University and the role of former Christian Coalition executive director Ralph Reed, a Bush campaign consultant who in April was caught lobbying Dubya on behalf of Microsoft. Largely overlooked, however, has been the wooing of conservatives like Sekulow, an attorney at Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice in Virginia, who carried a pro-school prayer legal brief signed by Bush into oral arguments at the Supreme Court in March. Also neglected is the substance of Bush's appeal to the Christian right: a pledge to appoint "strict constructionist," conservative judges to the federal bench.

In this election, Bush's judicial pledge of allegiance to conservatives looms large. Five of the nine justices on the U.S. Supreme Court are considered candidates for retirement in the next few years. Raising the stakes further is the abundance of vacancies throughout the federal courts.

In Washington, Democrats have accused Senate Republicans of slowing down the judicial nomination process during Clinton's second term to keep spots open for a possible GOP victor to fill

GEORGE W. BUSH PROMISES TO STACK THE COURTS FOR THE FAR RIGHT

BY HANS JOHNSON

upon taking office next January. Seventy-eight spots, or nearly 10 percent of all federal judgeships, are currently vacant.

As much as Bush relishes the chance to fill these openings, he is not tipping his hand. His comments to the mainstream press have been cagey. "There will be no litmus tests," he told a New Hampshire audience last summer, rebuffing calls from abortion foes to hound nominees on the subject, "except for whether or not the judges strictly interpret the Constitution." In a later TV interview, Bush invoked the term favored by right-wing opponents of privacy rights and gun-control laws in stating that any nominee of his for the bench would be a "strict

constructionist." In legal parlance, the term applies to judges who believe in a very narrow interpretation of the Constitution, especially in recognizing civil rights. In political lingo, it has become a code word for conservative.

Among religious conservatives, however, Bush sounds more like a deconstructionist when it comes to reproductive freedom and an obstructionist on civil rights. Michael Farris, a home-school advocate from Virginia, attended a closed-door meeting with Bush in Washington last September sponsored by the conservative Madison Project. According to Farris, Bush "spoke of the need to protect human life in terms that were consistent with our values." Activist Peter Marshall elaborated on Bush's stands at the event: "He said to us, 'Rest assured. ... I would not appoint somebody to a position who was an open homosexual.'" Later, in San Antonio, according to columnist Robert Novak, Bush used similar appeals to win over members of the Council on National Policy, a secretive group of rich, right-wing funders whose leaders include Robertson, Christian radio mogul Edward Atsinger and Amway cofounder Richard De Vos.

For years Republicans have pointed fingers at the left for what they alleged was a campaign of "judicial activism" to get staunch progressives onto the courts, rewrite precedents and create new rights. "What we're seeing now," says Nan Aron, president of Alliance for Justice, a Washington advocacy group that monitors federal judicial appointments, "is really judicial activism on the right."

Does Bush's rhetoric match the governor's track record? At his office on a shady street in Austin just a few blocks from the state capitol, Craig McDonald, director of Texans for Public Justice, says two words sum up Bush's impact on the state courts: "Corporate immunity."

In Texas, voters elect most judges. But Bush's four appointees to fill vacancies on the state Supreme Court—whose nine current justices are all Republicans—generally have excused corporations from liability and punitive damages. Thanks to Bush, McDonald says, corporations have so many friends on the bench that plaintiffs face a stacked deck. One case he cites is *Texas Utilities v. Timmons*, in which the state Supreme Court overturned a decision assessing damages against a power company in the death of 14-year-old Billy Byrum, who was electrocuted while climbing on one of the company's electric towers. The only warning posted at the site was a barely visible 10- by 3-inch sign, though neighbors reported frequent efforts by local teens to scale the structure. The justices, including the two Bush appointees on the court at the time, overturned a finding that the tower was an "attractive nuisance" and cleared the company of liability in Byrum's death.

While the Court has taken inconsistent stands on religious-conservative priorities, such as restricting abortion, two opinions with sharp conservative overtones stand out. In June

1996, the justices reversed a lower-court judgment and barred a gay Republican group from having a booth at a state party meeting where Bush was due to speak. In July 1998, the court struck down mandatory buffers around long-besieged Houston abortion clinics. Just a few days later, the clinics were forced to close after being hit by toxic acid attacks.

If he makes it to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Bush's judicial nominees would continue this legacy of coziness to business and cordiality with far-right extremists. The chance to shape this legacy is seductive for activists like Sekulow who, after eight years out of the loop, are eager for the executive's ear. After all, federal judicial appointments are for life, promising prolonged influence on policy-making. "Judges are a reliable issue for Republican presidents to placate and embolden the extreme right of their party," Aron says. "This important base cares passionately about the courts and tries every way it can to make its voice heard in the selection process."

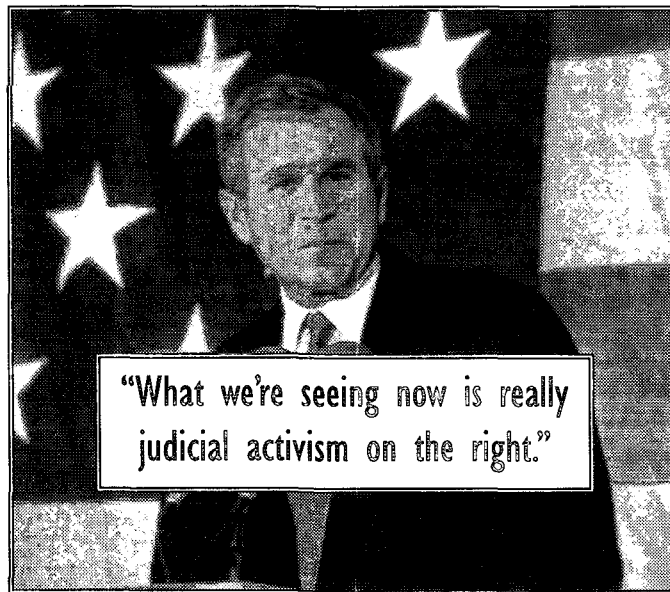
Sekulow in particular seems intent on raising conservatives' expectations for what Bush might deliver as president—and then holding him accountable. Last October, according to the *New York Times*, Bush's advisers arranged for Sekulow to introduce Dubya at the Christian Coalition's annual Road to Victory conference. Sekulow cast Bush's record in glowing terms to the audience. "Obviously," he told the throng, Bush is "standing up for the life of the unborn child."

This spring, Sekulow once again turned up in

Washington as a Bush ally. On March 29, he joined Texas Attorney General John Cornyn at the Supreme Court in arguing to uphold the reading of prayers before football games at some of the state's public high schools. Bush signed the brief in *Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe*, which appealed a Fifth Circuit ruling against the prayers. The Supreme Court is expected to issue its ruling in June.

The nod toward activists like Sekulow recalls the bruising—and ultimately successful—battle waged in 1991 by Bush's father, a GOP moderate, in support of Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas. Upon confirmation, Thomas, a darling of religious conservatives, thanked his right-wing allies for propelling his bid through the Senate. As he nears 10 years on the Court, Thomas has become a reliable vote against reproductive and civil rights and an occasional keynote speaker to far-right political groups, such as California's Claremont Institute. Thomas' ideological soulmate on the court is Antonin Scalia, the outspoken conservative Reagan appointee whom the younger Bush points to as a model judge.

Of course, even under the most watchful eyes, judicial nominations remain an imprecise science. David Souter, a staid New Hampshire judge whom the elder Bush appointed to the high



court the year before Thomas, has evolved into an astute, moderate voice on the court with a marked appreciation for privacy rights and civil liberties. Such tendencies have frustrated religious conservatives, and Gary Bauer all but denounced Souter as a traitor at a GOP candidate forum in January.

Progressives might not be so lucky next time around. Supreme Court nominees are just one part of what's at stake the next election. Despite the logjam in the Senate, Clinton has succeeded in securing enough appointments to the bench that nominees by Democratic presidents now constitute a tiny plurality over the judges named by Republican presidents, 392 to 382 among sitting judges as of April. But these numbers are deceiving: Seven of the nine members of the Supreme Court are Republican appointees; nine of the 13 Circuit Courts of Appeals remain dominated by judges put there by GOP presidents.

Aron points in particular to the Fourth Circuit, based in Richmond, Virginia, whose members sent ripples through legal circles by overturning the Supreme Court's 1966 *Miranda* precedent, which requires that police advise detainees of their

rights, and by rejecting the Violence Against Women Act, a 1994 federal law that permits victims of sexual violence to recoup lost income and medical costs. (Both rulings are currently under review by the Supreme Court.) The Fourth Circuit bench contains four vacancies, Aron notes, accounting for its continuing conservative tilt. The next president will fill those—and at least 200 others nationwide.

Progressives have a chance to harness the threat of a Bush judiciary to galvanize voters in the presidential election and several close races for the Senate, whose members vote on judicial nominees. But if Bush wins, it won't be long before a new wave of conservative appointees breaks onto the federal bench. "We certainly saw it with Reagan and Bush," says Aron, who led the 1987 battle to defeat the Supreme Court nomination of Robert Bork, perhaps the strictest constructionist of all. While Bork didn't make it, his protégés are standing at the ready. ■

Hans Johnson reports on labor, religion and politics from Washington.

George W. Bush—eager for a battle that will excite his conservative base—has made a "paycheck protection" plan aimed at crippling labor unions a top priority in reforming federal campaign-finance laws. At the same time, despite a pair of high-profile defeats two years ago, initiatives to restrict unions' political activity may reappear on ballots in Oregon and Colorado this fall.

Yet unlike 1998, this election season finds unions prepared for the fight. Labor leaders pledge to turn out their members in unprecedented numbers and sweep pro-labor candidates to victory in state and national races. "We learned a lot from the last campaign," says Tim Nesbitt, president of the state AFL-CIO in Oregon, where voters narrowly rejected an anti-union drive two years ago.

In the same election, voters approved a labor-backed measure to safeguard payroll deductions. But that issue remains tied up in litigation, leaving the door open for another attack by union opponents. Their new proposal, Initiative 25, is modeled on California's ill-fated 1998 initiative known as Prop 226, which would have forced unions to obtain annual written approval from members in order to funnel a portion of their dues money into lobbying and candidate donations. According to the Oregon Secretary of State's office, petitioners for Initiative 25 have already gathered most of the 89,000 signatures needed to make the July 7 deadline and qualify the proposal for November's ballot.

Both the substance of the measure, which unions say unfairly sidelines them from the democratic process, and the reputations of its sponsors are likely to boost the turnout of labor households this fall. Backers of Initiative 25 range from anti-tax gadfly Bill Sizemore to the local offshoot of Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition. The Coalition has made no secret of its foray into anti-union politics, sinking money into the previous ill-fated bid in Oregon that Sizemore spearheaded.

This year, both Sizemore and Lou Beres, the Coalition's state executive director, are upping the ante. In March, the *Northwest Labor*

Press obtained a copy of a Coalition fundraising letter by Beres revealing that initiative sponsors will pay the Coalition for signatures gained by its members on ballot-qualification petitions. Beres urges members to sign the petitions and lashes out at "big labor" for allegedly "backing the effort to normalize homosexuality." "God can give us the victory," Beres writes, "but we must do the fighting."

Divine help may be necessary if paycheck-protection sponsors are to overcome labor's growing expertise in discrediting them and defeating their measures at the polls. "It's like I recently told

the GOP leaders in the legislature," says Robert Greene, president of the state AFL-CIO in Colorado, where a similar paycheck-protection question might appear on the fall ballot. "I'm glad you didn't do it two years ago. But this year we're ready." Greene says his group's 134,000 members are "fired up" at the prospect of a ballot battle, which is giving a lift to voter registration drives by Colorado unions. One local has already registered more than 2,000 people, he says.

As in Oregon, the anti-labor ballot drive in Colorado reflects what Greene calls a "marriage of convenience" between business interests, like the National Right to Work Committee, and the religious right. Two legislators involved in the bid, state Rep. Ron May and Senate President Ray Powers, both hail from Colorado Springs, the conservative enclave that is home to religious-right mogul James Dobson of Focus on the Family, a paycheck-protection proponent.

Though the expense of fighting these ballot measures might siphon some resources from labor-backed candidates, unions are confident that the effort will pay dividends with a larger, livelier membership. That's exactly what happened when GOP leaders in Nevada launched a paycheck protection proposal in Nevada in 1998. The bid roused union members to defend their interests in state politics, a trend that shows no sign of abating two years later. "It was a great organizing tool," says Maggie Carlton, a Las Vegas waitress and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union member, who later that year won a seat in the state Senate. "Sometimes the bogeyman is the best thing you can have." ■

DOES GOD HATE UNIONS?

BY HANS JOHNSON

Out on the campaign trail, George W. Bush is hotfooting his way back to the center. Almost every day, he's either hawking a new education proposal, reassuring Catholics that his

Bob Jones University speech was all just a big misunderstanding, or opening up the big tent for a meeting with a selected group of gay Republicans. All of this is being done to recapture last fall's halcyon days when Dubya was the king of "compassionate conservatism."

Now that Bush has sewn up the nomination—thanks to a surge of support from the Christian right—his brain trust wants to distance the governor from leaders like Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and Lou Sheldon. But the ambitious Election 2000 campaigns that this trio have in the works could make the path toward the center a pretty rocky road.

NOT DEAD YET

1999 was not a great year for the Christian Coalition. Internally, the organization was in disarray. First, both President Donald Hodel and executive director Randy Tate, the two officials who took charge of the operation after the resignation of Ralph Reed, were summarily dismissed by founder Pat Robertson, who took over the group's leadership.

Then there were a series of financial setbacks: After years of haggling with the Internal Revenue Service, the Coalition finally gave up its fight for tax-exempt status. A shortfall caused the group to cease publication of its glossy bimonthly *Christian American* magazine—the primary vehicle for communicating with its constituency—and to replace it with a weekly e-mail newsletter. And, as *Church & State* magazine reported in January, the Coalition is being sued for nearly \$400,000 by Winchell & Associates, a direct-mail marketing firm that has helped the coalition raise more than \$7 million. Firm President Stephen Winchell says the Coalition may owe as much as \$2 million to various vendors.

Reports of the Coalition's death, however, have been greatly exaggerated. In August, U.S. District Judge Joyce Green threw out a lawsuit charging the Coalition with par-

tisan election activities, determining that the organization had not illegally aided Republican candidates through the distribution of voter guides and other campaign activities.

Although Green fined the group for its 1994 work in support of Newt Gingrich and Oliver North, then the GOP Senate nominee in Virginia, she argued that this did not automatically

disqualify the Coalition from distributing voter guides—its most visible project.

Green's decision opened the door for the Coalition to reassert its political power. Bush's primary victories were in

large part due to the heavy turnout by Robertson's troops. For November, Robertson has launched a "Countdown to Victory" campaign. The plan, as described in a December fundraising letter, promises: "Before Election Day 2000, we will distribute more than 70 million voter guides showing where candidates stand on key issues"; "register millions of new Christian voters"; "collect hundreds of thousands of petitions urging leaders of both major parties ... not to ignore the concerns of Christian voters"; and "recruit at least one 'servant leader' in each of 175,000 precincts in America—organizing Christian

Americans locally for political action."

REVIVING THE MORAL MAJORITY

Despite the fact that he has been a man without a political organization—his Moral Majority folded in 1989—Jerry Falwell has remained in the public spotlight. Throughout the Clinton impeachment hearings, Falwell was a favorite television guest of Larry King and Geraldo Rivera—often paired with his old nemesis and current buddy Larry Flynt. And who can forget when his *National Liberty Journal* outed Teletubbie Tinky-Winky?

Twenty years ago, Falwell's Moral Majority played a key role electing Ronald Reagan and building a conservative majority in Congress. On March 23, he wrote: "I am witnessing a rapidly growing surge of energy among religious conservatives in

ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

BY BILL BERKOWITZ



this nation. Following years of mistreatment and ridicule from the media and the political left, I believe conservative people of faith are once again gearing up to make their voices heard in the critical political elections of 2000."

Now he is beginning to build a new infrastructure and is calling on his old Moral Majority colleagues to join him. Falwell is creating the "People of Faith 2000" campaign, in which he pledges to "energize, inform and mobilize the 70 million religious conservatives in America"; register and bring to the polls at least 10 million new voters; and urge all registered voters to "fulfill their Christian duty by voting this year."

ANTI-GAY CRUSADE

To most Americans, Lou Sheldon is not a household name, but he is one of the hardest-working guys on the Christian right. Sheldon got his start around the same time that Anita Bryant was peddling orange juice and anti-gay rhetoric. His Anaheim, California-based Traditional Values Coalition (TVC) has been in the forefront of anti-gay campaigns and lobbying for more than two decades. Sheldon's specialty is driving a wedge between minority groups.

In 1993, TVC was one of the major distributors of the especially vicious video *Gay Rights, Special Rights*, which was aimed to stir up homophobia among African-Americans. Sheldon, who has no record of supporting civil rights initiatives, appealed to African-Americans by saying that "the freedom train to Selma has been hijacked" by gays.

More recently, TVC lobbied Latino members of the State Assembly from California's Central Valley to vote against a bill that would have guaranteed children a safe and support-

ive educational environment regardless of their sexual orientation. Sheldon worked with a coalition that sent out a controversial mailer depicting a black man kissing a Latino that warned, "Protect the children against homosexual assault"—a seemingly open invitation to anti-gay violence. Last winter, TVC worked tirelessly to ensure the passage of Proposition 22, California's anti-gay-marriage initiative.

Now Sheldon has unveiled his ambitious "Election 2000 Battle Plan"—"a proposal to fill America's highest elected offices in 2000 with leaders who are committed to the traditional moral and Biblical values that made America great." In order to achieve "nothing less than 100% Christian voter participation," Sheldon's campaign aims to raise an estimated \$12 million to "Ensure an Informed Christian Vote" with 50 million voter guides, the Internet, and TV, radio and newspaper advertisements; to identify 15 million brand-new Christian voters; and to generate a record turnout by creating phone banks, a transportation infrastructure, a vote-at-home program and a series of "Christian Action" training schools across America.

WISHFUL THINKING?

While all of these claims are part hyperbole, they shouldn't be ignored. Analyzing the 1994 vote that brought the Gingrich "revolution" to full fruition, William F. Buckley wrote that "a mere 2 percent of the vote going over to the GOP is responsible for all the clamor."

It is far too early to predict whether the Christian right will be as successful this November. However, it may be instructive to look at the recent primary season. The early, unexpected success of Sen. John McCain combined with the feeble campaigning of Dubya thrust the Christian right back into the spotlight. They became the key players in ensuring that Bush got his party's nod.

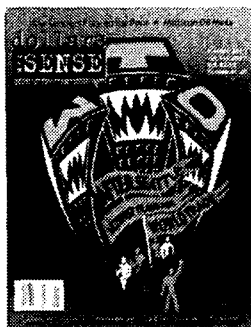
But unlike previous elections, by deciding early on that Bush was the horse to ride to the White House, the Christian right tacitly agreed not to nitpick his every move. On a late-January edition of *The 700 Club*, Robertson pledged to his audience that political pragmatism would pay off: "The people have got to get more sophisticated in this Christian movement ... to understand that you have to get people elected. If they're not elected, they're not going to do you any good."

Consider that a warning. ■

Bill Berkowitz is editor of Culturewatch (www.igc.org/culturewatch), a monthly publication tracking the religious right and related movements.

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Red Gotham

By Kim Phillips-Fein

For a few short years between the two world wars, the capital of Austria was known as "Red Vienna." Governed by Austria's (non-Bolshevik) Socialist Party, the city built tens of thousands of units of public housing, providing homes for 200,000 Viennese. It expanded public health ser-

Working-Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II

By Joshua B. Freeman
The New Press
409 pages, \$35

vices and working-class education, built libraries and subsidized magazines. But the rest of Austria was intensely hostile to the socialist city, and the government fell when the repressive, quasi-fascist Christian Socials came to power in 1934.

Joshua B. Freeman's excellent new book, *Working-Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II*, brings to mind the sad fate of Red Vienna. After the Second World War, Freeman argues, New York City was "a social democratic polity unique in the country in its ambition and achievements ... a model as close to European social democracy as the country had seen." New York's unions and city government constructed housing, raised wages, expanded the city's free public university system, provided health care and even built a partially public municipal arts center. But in the '70s, New York's elite took advantage of a recession to strike back against the city's labor movement and destroy the municipal government's social programs. The result was deepening inequality, impoverishment of the city's public resources and the erosion of New York's working-class culture.

The canonical tale of the decline of New York (and, by extension, urban America) focuses on the '60s: the breakdown of social mores, the spread of drugs, riots and the rise of black radicalism. Some urban historians—like Thomas Sugrue writing about Detroit—have argued that the exodus of whites from the city after the chaos of the late '60s had its roots in the political econo-

my of the Golden Age, when deindustrialization began and whites rioted against blacks moving into their neighborhoods. Unlike Sugrue, Freeman accepts that the '50s and '60s were glory days for New York, the high point of the city's unparalleled experiment in "socialism in one city." But in telling a story which emphasizes that poverty and its attendant social ills resulted from the calculated destruction of the social state by a powerful and anxious business class, he also challenges the neocon narrative.

Working-Class New York opens with a description of the nationwide 1946 strike wave, the largest in American history. In New York, striking elevator operators shut down Wall Street and Madison Avenue; 10,000 painters walked off their jobs; 7,000 telephone and telegraph operators were out for a month. The immediate postwar period was the high point of Communist Party activity in New York, and Freeman emphasizes the role the Communists played in vaulting labor into politics: "As a matter of principle they stuck their noses into every facet of city life."

New York may seem an odd choice for the postwar era's paradigmatic labor town. Unlike the Fordist cities of the Midwest, its industrial economy was based on small shops producing garments, buttons, beer, cigarettes, sugar, pharmaceuticals, linotype, machine parts, even "Hawaiian" leis. In many ways, New York's industrial landscape looked much as it had in the 19th century, with its "loft buildings and tiny workshops; the webs of contractors and subcontractors; and the persistence ... of highly skilled craftsmen working alongside less skilled and more poorly paid operatives."

The city's unique economy allowed unions to influence urban politics to an extent unimaginable in Chicago or Detroit. Unlike the Midwestern auto giants, small manufacturers relied on the economic infrastructure of the city, instead of simply seeing it as a source of cheap labor; dependent on suppliers, they could not easily move out. New York's industrial

employers were politically subordinate to finance and real estate interests, and the fragmentation of capital in New York allowed unions to take over the social and political role corporations like Ford and General Motors played elsewhere.

If the diversity of the city's economy meant that manufacturers were weaker politically, it also meant that workers were employed in an amazing variety of occupations. At the end of the war, New York had 1,107 private-sector locals. As Freeman puts it, "A roster of New York unions has a Whitmanesque quality to it." There were "four locals of Airline Dispatchers; eleven of Barbers and Beauty Culturists; eleven of Boilermakers; forty-two of Carpenters; one of Commercial Artists and three of Coopers; one each of Dental Technicians, Diamond Workers, Firemen, Foremen and Funeral Chauffeurs; thirty-eight of Hodcarriers, Building and Common Laborers (including the House Wreckers and the Curb

Cities are places where people must depend on human cooperation rather than their own private wealth and ingenuity.

Setters); twenty-five of Machinists; fifty-three of Railway and Steamship Clerks; one each of Screen Publicists, Seltzer Water Workers, Sightseeing Guides, and Theater Ushers, six of Upholsterers, and one of Vending Machine Service Workers." That's not even counting the Russian Bath Rubbers!

New York's unions had what Freeman describes as a "hybrid craft-industrial" structure. For example, the largest union in the city—the International Ladies Garment Worker Union—was divided into 24 separate locals, each representing a different craft or branch within the industry (say, corsets and brassieres). On top of this, there were separate "nationality" locals for Italian workers. But although the union's structure was so decentralized, joint boards within the

union would bargain for groups of locals at once, setting contracts covering workers throughout the union. This blend of craft pride and industry-wide solidarity is precisely what Freeman finds so appealing about New York's labor movement.

At their apogee in the '50s and '60s, the city's unions exercised tremendous influence over municipal politics. Rent controls, imposed throughout the country during World War II, were only preserved in New York after the war's end. About 125,000 units of public housing were built in the city, and New York's unions built and ran enormous co-operative housing projects. The city ran 22 public hospitals in the postwar era; no other city had more than three. The transit system—mostly built before the war, but incredibly cheap throughout the postwar period—was the largest in the country.

Not just bread but roses too blossomed in postwar New York: in the city's public universities, which enrolled 93,000 students in 1960, and the City Center, built by the municipal government and unions, where you could see opera and symphonies for a fraction of the price charged by the Met. Freeman's evocative, occasionally nostalgia-tinged (he's a native) descriptions of life in New York make one remember that cities are places where people must depend on human co-operation, rather than their own private wealth and ingenuity, for the most basic elements of survival. Even more than benefiting its own working class, Freeman suggests that postwar New York offered the entire country an alternative vision of society. At a time when Americans were settling into the sterile, isolated cottages of suburbia, where privatized consumption and domestic life are supposed to satiate every social and emotional need, New York continued to sustain a rich public culture, an image of the good life as inherently urban.

Freeman does a better job of describing New York's postwar political economy than explaining what happened to it. He argues that what really destroyed New York's experiment in local social democracy was the mid-'70s "fiscal crisis." Banks, anxious about defaults in the Third World, demanded that New York pay back billions of dollars in municipal debt, and jacked up interest rates on new loans. The federal government had to

help bail the city out, and the Treasury Department devised a budget plan for New York not unlike the "structural adjustment" plans the IMF imposes today. The city was forced to strip municipal services, raise transit fares and CUNY tuition, and fire thousands of public workers. Eschewing close analysis of the city's finances, Freeman argues that the *goal* of the feds was to discredit the city's distinctive version of liberalism. Treasury Secretary William Simon said he hoped the plan would be "so punitive, the overall experience so painful, that no city, no political subdivision, would ever be tempted to go down the same road."

New York's unions retrenched. As they did so, the weaknesses inherent in their "hybrid" structure and their craft and ethnic particularism came out in ugly ways. Though Freeman talks about corruption, it deserves a more prominent role in the story of labor's decline in New York. As labor writers like Mike Parker have argued, unions structured around ethnic ties are especially likely to devolve into personal fiefdoms. If a leader claims to represent his followers simply by dint of sharing an organic identity—race, craft, ethnicity—this prevents the development of genuinely democratic structures of accountability. Given the importance of bonds of ethnicity and personal ties in

New York's unions, the absence of centralized democratic structures, and the high degree of autonomy locals possessed, it doesn't seem an accident that the city was home to some of the country's filthiest locals in the '70s, '80s and '90s.

Another aspect of New York's downfall that is oddly absent from Freeman's account is the ascendant political power of real estate within the city during the '70s. While New York had an exceptionally strong labor movement, it was also home to perhaps the most powerful group of real estate developers in the country, who played a far more prominent role in New York politics throughout the postwar period than Freeman's narrative suggests. In a sense, the fate of manufacturing in New York is itself testament to the power of FIRE—finance, insurance and real estate.

Deindustrialization in New York was motivated partly by straightforward economic factors: the search for lower wages, cheaper land, nonunion workers. But in the '70s, as Bob Fitch argues in *The Assassination of New York*, developers, city planners and real estate moguls sought to rezone huge swaths of the city for office buildings only, seeking to scoop up the astronomical profits that come from converting low-rent industrial lofts into premium office towers and luxury



We will give you Ausropa, by the artist duo INHABIT. From **Carnival in the Eye of the Storm: War / Art / New Technologies: KOSOV@**, an exhibit, lecture and film series at the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon through April 29.

condos, speeding New York's decline. Developers were only too happy to see dirty, ugly factories—and the people who worked in them—disappear from the newly gleaming downtown.

Finally, "New York exceptionalism" can explain both the power of labor and the power of real estate. But in some ways, Freeman's book demonstrates the limits of "municipal socialism." No city government, after all, could have kept building so much public housing when HUD's budget was being slashed year after year. No amount of civic goodwill could have kept the public hospitals providing quality care given the stinginess of Medicaid payments and the swelling ranks of the uninsured. The rise of suburbia—thanks to federal subsidies like the mortgage interest tax deduction—drained New

Yorkers away from the city. Even the fiscal crisis showed that the city's politics were dependent on national events. The lesson seems obvious: To protect local institutions, unions must hold sway in national politics. One wonders if New York's fragmented, decentralized labor movement would have been able to achieve this under any circumstances.

But these are just quibbles. Freeman ends on the right note—and the conclusion is heartbreaking. In the '80s, Donald Trump built his gaudy palaces while the subways overflowed with beggars. "Planned shrinkage"—allowing neighborhoods like the South Bronx to rot into oblivion, to "encourage" poor people to leave the city for more economically prosperous regions—became quasi-official municipal policy. In the Giuliani

renaissance, the city has polarized between impoverished personal service workers and the new money men of the financial markets—who, as Freeman notes, are hardly dependent on the city at all, their power coming from the markets, the Treasury and the Federal Reserve. Today, its public culture waning, New York seems little more than an immense collection of urban amenities—sleek coffeshops, refurbished lofts, pricey lounges serving amusing cocktails. In short, it has become what John Lindsay, mayor during the early '70s, hoped for: "a fun city." *Working-Class New York* makes it clear just how much has been lost. ■

Kim Phillips-Fein, a contributing editor of *The Baffler*, writes frequently for *In These Times*.

Dinner and a Show

By Jason Sholl

The past 10 years have witnessed the extraordinary rise of eating out in America. Exotic bistros, celebrity chefs and theme restaurants have become common even in America's dullest suburbs. And it has become not only acceptable, but *de rigueur*, for members of the middle and aspiring-middle classes to showcase their gastronomic prowess there.

**The Invention of the Restaurant:
Paris and Modern
Gastronomic Culture**
by Rebecca L. Spang
Harvard University Press
325 pages, \$35

Rebecca L. Spang's *The Invention of the Restaurant* traces the unlikely roots of the current culinary obsession. History has emblazoned public eating deep in the Western imagination—from the legendary Greek symposia, to the fateful Last Supper, to the medieval "knights of the round table." Yet according to Spang, the modern restaurant—with its fixed prices, a *la carte* menu and service on demand—is a far more recent invention than commonly assumed. Modern dining, she contends, emerged in a highly specific

location over a very precisely defined time period: in Paris around the time of the French Revolution, to be exact.

The picture Spang paints of pre-revolutionary French cuisine is bleak. During the early 18th century, France—that great culinary motherland of lore—had a reputation for some of the worst food in Europe, and more than one traveler echoed the German nobleman Joachim Nemeitz's disappointment with the cuisine there: "Nearly everyone believes that you eat well in France, and especially in Paris, but they are mistaken." Thanks to the chaotic structure of guild regulation, "the man who made stews could not sell mustard ... the preparer of patés was prohibited from selling coffee," and the cuisine suffered appreciably. Amongst this bouillabaisse of hyper-specialized cooks and caterers, Spang says, the modern restaurant emerged from a simple cup of consommé.

"Before a restaurant was a place to eat," Spang writes, "a restaurant [or restorant] was a thing to eat"—a restorative broth served to fashionably delicate members of the French aristocracy in small public parlors. Distinguished from inns, taverns and cookshops by their individual tables, salutary consommés,

and unfixed mealtimes, these establishments had little in common with the picture we might have today of a "Paris restaurant." They sold little solid food and advertised specifically to those too frail to eat an evening meal. Nonetheless, Spang says, the word "restaurant" already conjured an aura of urban sophistication, novelty and mystery that even Paris' cafés were hard-pressed to match.

Early restaurateurs' condensed bouillons presented "a mythical version of sincere, healthful country life which proved acceptable to an urban, elite population." They formed the backbone of a Rousseauian nouvelle cuisine dedicated to "simplicity, delicacy and cleanliness," which quickly caught on with Paris' intellectual avant-garde. "Grandiose as it may sound," Spang writes, "the restaurant was inscribed—right from its beginnings in a tightly sealed soup kettle—in debates about modernity and historical change."

Cutting-edge cuisine alone, however, did not account for these prototypical restaurants' remarkable rise to fame. Open until midnight, offering private dining cabinets, and allowing mixed company (which neither taverns, cafés nor cabarets permitted at the time), restaurants quickly became a hotbed for drunken debauches, *demi-monde* scandals and, most infamously, rampant philandering. As Spang notes, "Since a married woman could charge her hus-

band with adultery only if he actually housed his mistress in their home, restaurant cabinets legally provided philandering (male) spouses with homes away from home." The affluent and the amorous were hardly the only people to frequent late-18th century Paris restaurants, Spang points out, but they lent an air of mildly risqué respectability to all others who did.

By the 1780s, these urban spas for people who "do not usually eat two full meals or supper" served considerably more than bouillons and had become the place par excellence to eat an enormous evening meal. One account from this period describes a customer ordering "a full meal of two soups, two chicken fricassees, six mutton cutlets, a roast chicken, and a side-dish of artichokes, as well as bread and wine." The dinner table's drunken and ephemeral camaraderie seemed to grant a certain license, and people were imagined to say and do things in a restaurant that they would not (and could not) do elsewhere. The restaurant had become an unmistakable fixture of the Parisian landscape.

On the eve of the French Revolution, the fashionably sensitive aristocracy saw something attractively modern in the new restaurants. After the Revolution, the emerging bourgeoisie found in them something they could truly call their own. As the legendary gourmet Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin put it: "Any man who can spend fifteen or twenty francs, and who sits down in a first-class restaurant, is sure to be treated at least as well as if he sat at a prince's table." Given the social pretensions and insecurities of Paris' new middle class, it's no wonder that such establishments caught on.

More than merely popularizing restaurant dining, Spang shows, the First Empire bourgeoisie placed the activity squarely in the realm of artistic debate. Gastronomic literature, led by Grimrod de la Reynière's *Almanach des Gourmands* (1803) and Brillat-Savarin's *Physiology of Taste* (1825), "evoked a world where restaurateurs and pastry chefs were the equivalents of theater entrepreneurs and playwrights, and where one candymaker charged admission simply to look at his new bonbons." These new guidebooks—interspersing outrageous gastronomic anecdotes with helpful hints, restaurant

reviews and elaborate recipes—quickly became one of the era's bestselling genres. Novelists, playwrights and diary-keeping travelers repeatedly pushed food and cookery from the realm of quotidian necessity into that of delirious fantasy. The travelling Briton Thomas Jessop "was only expressing a commonplace when he wrote that 'Epicurus himself would stand bewildered at the sight of [the Parisian restaurant] Véry's bill of fare.'"

Paris' most famous restaurants may have been within the financial reach of only a tiny fraction of its population, but

The French made chefs the equivalents of playwrights, placing fine dining squarely in the realm of artistic debate.

they were in the view and imagination of all. "As surely as restaurants relied on fish and fresh vegetables, silverware and champagne," Spang writes, "they depended on legend." Part of the after-work world of pleasure and festivity in the first regime in which such distinctions were possible, restaurant meals played a central role in rumors of bourgeois prosperity. Spang writes, "Everything, from the voluminous wine lists and invisible pantries to the smells emanating from a restaurant kitchen's street-level gates, alluded to the copious success and inevitable progress of modern urban life." They still do today.

The gastronomic frenzy of early-19th century Paris established a code gourmand more enduring than any of the legal codes over which Napoleon so famously slaved—a code whose rules and institutions have dominated the Western culinary imagination for nearly two centuries now. The restaurant review, the printed menu and such culinary staples as "chicken marengo" and "bechamel sauce" all originated in this period.

If early 19th-century Paris witnessed the birth of modern Western cuisine, then late 20th-century California witnessed its rebirth. In the early 1980s, West

Coast chefs reacted against large servings, provincial presentation and increasingly predictable ingredients and preparations; the West's second great nouvelle cuisine was born. Pioneers like Alice Waters, founder of Berkeley's Chez Panisse, championed back-to-the-earth wholesomeness in food and dining. Building on this base, self-styled culinary artists like Wolfgang Puck experimented with spectacular, eye-catching presentations, exotic ingredients and multicultural flourishes. Today, "new" American cuisine is no longer terribly new, and fantastic creations such as Charlie Trotter's Squab Salad with Foie Gras Hollandaise, White Truffle Oil, 50-Year-Old Balsamic Vinegar and Crispy Pig's Feet have become staples of the high culinary order. Popular concern about food and dining has again reached a feverish pitch.

Occurring nearly 200 years apart, and under very different social and political circumstances, these two periods of gastronomic reverie nonetheless have remarkable similarities. Both began as attempts to restore simplicity to cooking, and ended up approaching something quite nearly the opposite 20 years later. Both depended largely on novelty and theatricality to ensure their success. And both imbued fine dining with an aura of hedonistic abandon. In 1806, Grimrod de la Reynière famously compared women to food, and found the former sadly lacking. In 2000, committed readers of *Gourmet* and *Saveur* would be disappointed by anything less.

Unfortunately, Spang never discusses the connections between these two periods. The omission is disappointing, and all the more so given her excellent treatment of dining out's transformation into an inherently exclusionary activity. For the early 19th-century Parisian bourgeoisie, restaurant dining emerged as a crucial marker of social status. For today's Hollywood moguls and IPO millionaires, it continues to confer a similar distinction. Spang writes: "The nineteenth century's restaurant fantasy implicitly required the presence of somebody outside: some poor devil with his nose pressed to the window ... or some group of young street urchins devouring their bread seasoned only by the savory fumes emanating from a restaurant's hard metal grate." While the distinction between

gastronomy and the gutter may be more subtle today than it was in Revolution-era Paris, it's still there, and it's still central to the allure of restaurant dining.

Running throughout Spang's book, however, is the undercurrent that restaurants aren't exclusively about food, and never were. They are about stories: stories about what has happened in restaurants, what could happen in restaurants. "Their tale," Spang writes, "was not about completion or satiety or closure, but about desires never quite fully

satisfied and inevitably aroused again on the morrow." Every bit as much as dining conforms to the rhythms of human necessity, we too conform to the impersonal logic of our meals—their image, their fashion, their incessant cycles.

Dinner out does not stand simply for food, but rather for an entire show organized around food—from the eight or 12 diminutive courses, to the exposed kitchen, to the lengthy menu-item descriptions often running an entire page in length. In the restaurant,

enveloped in a world where food occupies one's sight and mind, our problems disappear during the hours of surfeit. Only empty dessert plates will lift the veil. As with the incandescence of the emptying cinema, the fairy tale ends and we begrudgingly reacquire ourselves with the actors not of a show, but of our lives, the world we live in, and the world we want it to become. ■

Jason Sholl is an editorial assistant for *Lingua Franca*.

Secrets and Lives

By Scott McLeeme

Several years ago I came across, and pounced upon, a book by Joseph Mitchell called *Joe Gould's Secret*. Mitchell was a writer for the (old) *New Yorker* and something of a legend around

Joe Gould's Secret

By Joseph Mitchell
Vintage Books
208 pages, \$9.95

Joe Gould's Secret

Directed by Stanley Tucci

the magazine. That fact was not known to me at the time, nor would it have inspired rapt fascination, in any case; but the prospect of reading a whole book about Joe Gould was another matter.

In accounts of Greenwich Village during the first half of the 20th century, Gould turns up as a minor character. He was a roving landmark, an embodiment of the spirit of the place. In Albert Parry's *Garrets and Pretenders* (1933), Gould is described as "a genuine relic of the old days" of bohemianism: "a perfect portrait of a dwarf intellectual with his big, bald head, his wisp of a beard, his eyes peering from under his eye-glasses. ... There is, as ever, a stack of notebooks in Joe Gould's arms, loose or in a portfolio, and he keeps on entering everything he sees and hears."

The notebooks contained Gould's *Oral History of the World in Our Time*—into which he incorporated thousands of conversations and life stories from people who occupied the lower depths of the city. He had consecrated his life to this

masterpiece. To get by, he improvised. Gould was legendary for discovering that you could make soup from hot water and ketchup. He accepted donations from writers and artists who "sold out" enough to have a roof over their heads. The words "property" and "propriety" are

Quaker saying has it, spoke to my condition. But it was difficult to learn more about him. During the '20s, a few pages from his *Oral History* appeared in important literary magazines, which I dug up and read with some disappointment. They were brief yet woolly essays. Gould denounced materialism and conformity, questioned the distinction between madness and sanity, and proclaimed his vision of "an aristocracy in which each person can be an aristocrat." Little, in short, that



ABBOT GENSER/USA FILMS

It's all about finding the right words.

closely related; and Joe Gould had no use for either. At the same time, he was contemptuous of the Village radicals. Poet and essayist Milton Klonsky (a minor figure from the *Partisan Review* circle) recounted Gould's slogan from the '30s: "Poets of the world ignite! You have nothing to lose but your brains!"

Gould refused to adapt to society on any terms but his own; this, as the

Whitman hadn't said, and said better. Beyond the stray anecdote in other people's memoirs, these fragments seemed to be all that remained of Joe Gould.

So Joseph Mitchell's little book was a revelation. *Joe Gould's Secret* has two parts. The opening is Mitchell's *New Yorker* profile of Gould from 1942. It filled in some background on Gould, who was a Harvard alumnus (class of

1911) and ex-newspaperman. It portrayed a man who had sacrificed security to freedom, and described how unrelentingly Gould worked on the *Oral History*, which had reached a length of 9 million words. There were colorful details about his place in the Village scene—how, for example, restaurant owners hid the ketchup bottles when they saw him coming.

Two writers, hurling themselves against an immovable block.

The next and much longer portion of the book was a memoir. In it, Mitchell recounted his dealings with Gould, both while researching the profile and over the years that followed. It is a very sensitive and brilliant piece of meta-journalism: an essay on how reporter and subject can get entangled, each becoming part of the other's life story. But to someone interested mostly in Gould himself, its impact derived mainly from Mitchell's painful exposé of Gould's great secret.

To onlookers—and to Mitchell himself, at first—the *Oral History* looked like a fanatical effort to capture the world around him in words. A graphomaniac, Gould filled thousands of composition books with the narratives people recounted from their lives. But eventually Mitchell got to read the notebooks. Gould had been scribbling about a handful of incidents and ideas that obsessed him. The story he had to tell was his own, and even then, there were only a few events and questions he could wrestle into prose. He revised those pages, tirelessly, over and over—trying to impose form on his own experience. Maybe with the next draft he would find out what it meant.

Stanley Tucci's decision to put *Joe Gould's Secret* on the screen was a gamble. The high point in a writer's week is when hours of hair-pulling frustration give way to a bright idea; this may well occur while staring off into space or changing the kitty litter. The moment itself is exciting, but not the kind of thing audiences often pay to see (though I'm asking a fair price for tickets if anyone wants to stop by).

The gamble pays off, modestly. *Joe Gould's Secret* is, above all, its actors' film. Ian Holm portrays the old bohemian just as the chroniclers of Village life describe him: holy fool as homunculus, with the trace of a Boston patrician accent as he wheedles donations for the Joe Gould Fund. Tucci plays Mitchell as brooding but sweetly disposed—an émigré from North Carolina, in love with New York, but making no effort to match the city's own bluster.

Much that is implicit in the book about the difference between the men is rendered in the movie as outright contrast. Gould is a Yankee and a manic talker; a bohemian and often homeless, by choice. Mitchell is a Southerner and depressive; he writes for the consummate bourgeois magazine, and is a family man. Other characters are less sharply drawn, despite appearances by Susan Sarandon and Steve Martin. And the director has been remarkably careless about registering the passing of time. A viewer would have no reason to suppose that 15 years pass in the course of the story. One of Mitchell's daughters, who

looks about six when the film opens (in 1942) has reached the ripe old age of seven by the time Gould dies (in 1957).

A note at the close of the film explains that his memoir of Joe Gould was the last piece of work Joseph Mitchell published. For decades after it appeared in 1964, he showed up regularly at his *New Yorker* office, spent the day typing something that nobody ever saw, then went home. Long before Mitchell died in 1996, he was an almost mythical figure: a writer hurling himself against a block so huge that it never budged an inch.

Which is not, in fact, the best way to remember him. The film may lead new readers to the original book—or to Mitchell's collection *Up in the Old Hotel*, which gathers all of his pieces, including the two essays on Gould. Mitchell could write about calypso, or the daily life of a bearded lady at the circus, or the Mohawks who had settled in Brooklyn, or a social club exclusively for deaf-mutes—all with an understated elegance that makes his work a classic of American prose. It is the book that Joe Gould wanted to write, and tried, but couldn't. ■

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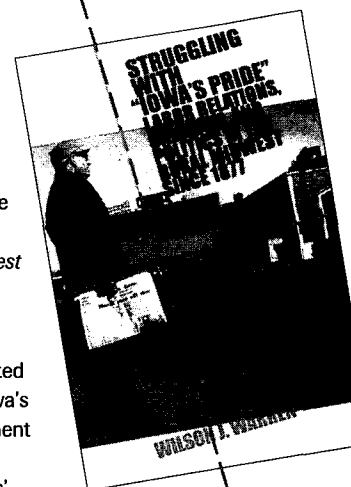
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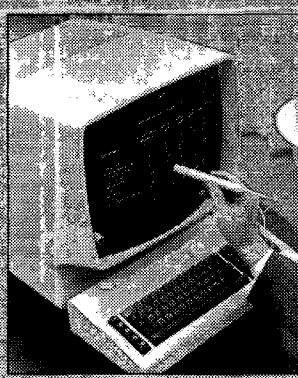
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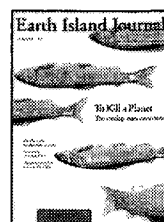
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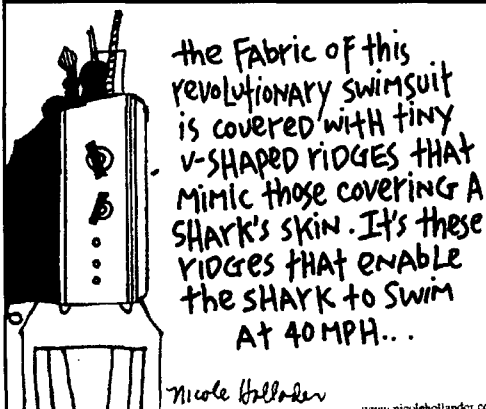
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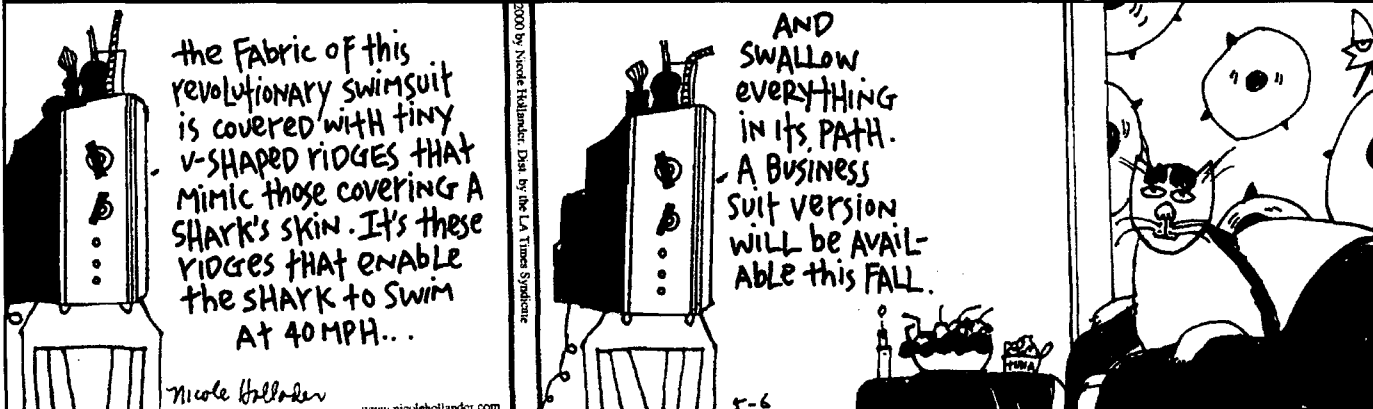
SYLVIA



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AND SWALLOW EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH. A BUSINESS SUIT VERSION WILL BE AVAILABLE THIS FALL.

By Nicole Hollander



Continued from page 30

we are never fierce, never firm, it simply means that we believe we can get through this thing without violence or exploitation—and if we can't, then maybe it's not worth it.

You encourage mothers to try to find time for cooking or gardening for the sake of their sanities. Barbara Ehrenreich has recommended that mothers teach their children how to clean up after themselves rather than hire maids or housekeepers. Do you worry about women who spurn "homecare" or simply don't have time for it?

Well, I have certainly been known to spurn homecare. Sometimes slowing down and centering on myself means painting the house, sometimes it means tripping out on the quality of the light coming through my office window, sometimes it means getting really into a writing project, sometimes it means hiring a cleaning lady, and sometimes (and to my own surprise) it means doing the dishes. I make a lot of different recommendations in the book, but my point is always this: Put your sanity first. Sure, the baby cried all night and this morning you have to overthrow the government, but take care of yourself. Because we need this revolution to be a joyful one.

You also advise mothers "to explore our ambitions, whatever they may be," but what are we to do when ambition pulls us in directions that feel downright wrong or, at least, very stressful for our kids? Involvement in serious organizing for worthwhile change has destroyed many a family's seeming equilibrium.

The fear that our ambitions are going to hurt our kids is not totally irrational, but I think it's dangerously overemphasized in our culture. The maternal image that seems to dominate

movies and TV is of this crazed, ambitious mother who is trying to take over the corporate world and who hardly knows her children's names. Of course, the happy ending to that story has to be that the mother finally has a nervous breakdown, comes to her senses and goes back to the ironing board. I'm not into that scenario. I don't think that ambition and soulful motherhood are mutually exclusive. And I think that every ambition is worth a try. I've been involved in organizing efforts that did take too much out of me and too much out of my family, but it's not the end of the world. You just stop and say, "Well, that was a huge pain the ass. I think I'll leave that work to the people without kids next time." And then you try something else.

How did you become so eclectic, citing such diverse sources as Nietzsche and Pagan Kennedy? Where do you find inspiration?

That's funny! One of my favorite Pagan Kennedy stories stars a girl who has a total nervous breakdown from reading too much Nietzsche. The question of eclecticism comes up when my friends do my astrological chart, too. They say the main theme in my life is sex, death, the occult and other hard to grasp topics. And I'm like, now, is that really a theme? It sounds more like a garage sale of ideas. But what can I say? I take my inspiration from Emma Goldman and Erma Bombeck and the Denny's menu and Nina Hagen and Thich Nhat Hahn and *People* magazine and Michelle Tea and the guy who picks up my recycling blaring Aaron Neville out of his stolen shopping cart and everyone who e-mails me their crazy thoughts every day. There's probably a diagnosis for it, and a corresponding medication, but I'm not interested in fixing the problem. ■

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Moms Rule

**Beth Schulman
Interviews
Ariel Gore,
one hip mama**

Having spent most of her teen-age years traveling solo in Asia and Europe, Ariel Gore was already a woman of the world at age 19 when she gave birth to Maia. But motherhood proved to be the most challenging destination she had encountered: "the shore of a strange island" where she often found herself surrounded by "voices of discouragement." Over the 10 years since Maia's birth, Ariel has built a life around the project of countering those voices, first for herself, and gradually with the thousands of other mothers she has reached in her work.

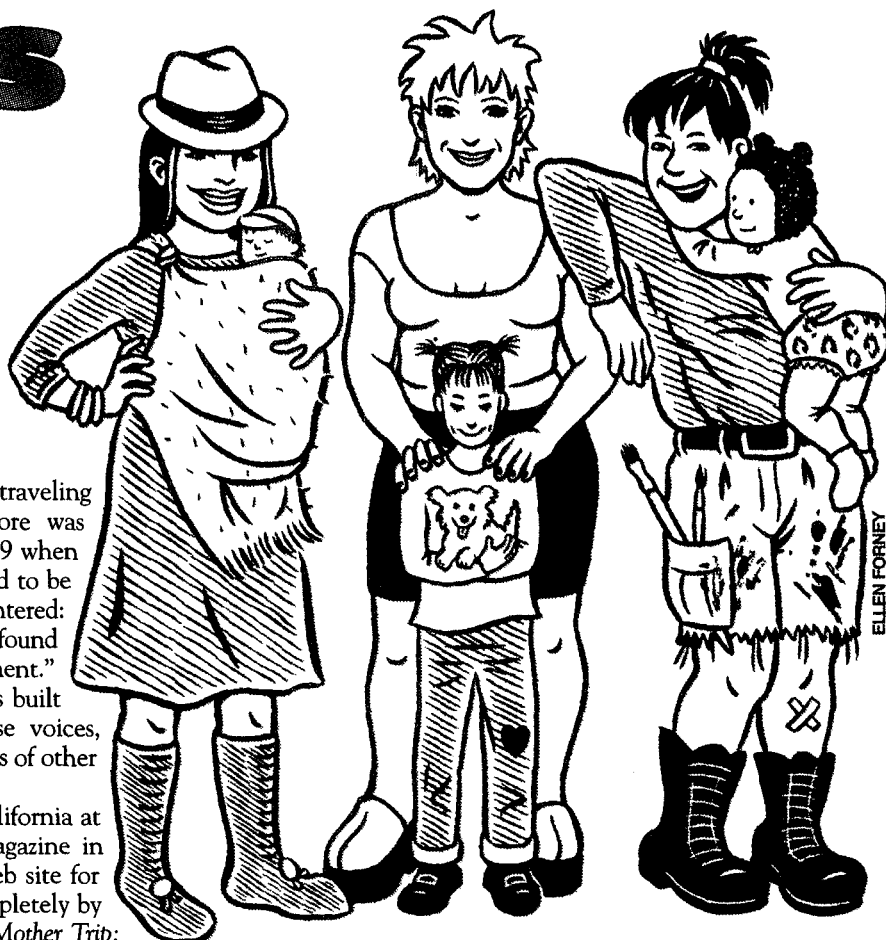
While still a student at the University of California at Berkeley, she began publishing *Hip Mama* magazine in 1993. The publication has spawned a busy Web site for hip mamas (hipmama.com) now managed completely by the moms it attracted. Ariel's new book, *The Mother Trip: Hip Mama's Guide to Staying Sane in the Chaos of Motherhood*, blends her experience and commentary into a manifesto for the liberation of mothers, children and even fathers from the many oppressive conventions of modern parenting.

I just finished reading your book on motherhood and, as someone who didn't embark on motherhood until I was over 30, I found myself envying your decision to combine becoming an adult with becoming a mother. You have turned your wisdom about managing life with a child into an approach to life that will sustain you, I suspect, well past menopause. Do you think that women who start out as teen mothers tend to have an under-appreciated capacity for dealing with chaos?

Teen moms actually do really well over time, if you want to talk about statistics. But it's a gamble with pretty high stakes. For me, the decision to have Maia at 19 was a wise one. But it was made with more naïveté than wisdom. I could have spent the entire decade of my twenties running around making not-very-productive trouble. It was the responsibility for this new person that inspired me to build a life I wouldn't mind hearing her complain about on *Oprah* 25 years down the line.

When pregnant teen-agers ask my advice now, I advise them not to do it. If my daughter were to ask my advice in five or 10 years, I would advise her not to do it. Because if a young woman's doubt is big enough that she will actually listen to me, then it's the right counsel. But when they say, "Screw you, I can do this," I have to say, "Right on—I totally support you." It's a rocky road. But it's not a tragic one.

Your book often comes back to theme of fatigue. Do you think sleep deprivation and general weariness are endemic to motherhood across cultures, or are we just victims of our overachieving culture?



Someone else mentioned that to me after reading it, too. I don't think I realized quite how many references to sleep-deprivation I was making, but exhaustion has certainly been the theme of the past 10 years of my life.

A certain amount of sleeplessness comes naturally with motherhood, but the cultural blueprint we've been handed as moms takes it to an unhealthy level. The expectations our global capitalist society, with its isolated nuclear families, puts on parents, and on mothers in particular, is mind-boggling. And of course we internalize these pressures and end up conspiring with the mindset that says, "You are not doing enough," even when we are working ourselves to the bone.

I meet mothers all the time who tell me with a straight face that they are lazy, that they aren't doing anything with their lives. But of course they can't even finish the conversation because they are so busy. The only solution is revolution in our personal and societal attitudes toward maternity and a guaranteed salary for all moms.

At one point you make the radical suggestion that "CEOs should be more like moms." Why is the notion that someone can be both caring and authoritative so alien?

Well, that's just a Judeo-Christian God hangover, isn't it? Like: God, and therefore our fathers, and therefore our bosses, all have to be huge jerks because we lowly humans are intrinsically flawed and need to be controlled.

It's the same worldview that makes it O.K. to drop bombs on the planet, because the earth is seen as a sinful place that has to be overcome. And it's the same worldview that breeds tyranny of every kind. A more maternal approach doesn't mean that

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